THE NEW REPUBLIC

OVEMBER 20, 2000

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
A Journal of Politics and the Arts

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4 **CORRESPONDENCE** Is Pollard a traitor? Can the Clinton administration build cars? &c.

6 **ANDREW SULLIVAN** TRB: SURREALITY The election descends into pandemonium.

9 **THE EDITORS ?** Political chaos and constitutional order the morning after the election.

10 **NOTEBOOK** Ed Rendell jumps ship just a little too soon, &c.

12 **LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN** SURRENDER The Clintonites decide Europe needs an army.

13 **GERSHOM GORENBERG** JERUSALEM DISPATCH: POWER OF MYTH Did the Temple Mount kill peace?

15 **RYAN LIZZA** NEWARK DISPATCH: KNOCK AND DRAG How to get out the black vote.

17 **MICHAEL CROWLEY** RACE NEUTRAL Nader drones while Gore burns.

18 **MICHELLE COTTLE** CAMPAIGN JOURNAL: END RUN The race that won't end.

21 **DAVID GRANN** THE HARD WAY In the final days of the campaign he's been preparing for all his life, it's Al Gore versus Al Gore.

24 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: CHANGING WORLDS *The Bridge* is sophisticated family drama; *Me & Isaac Newton* introduces us to the family of scientists.

25 **PAUL BERMAN** DEPRESSIVE LUCIDITY *The Elementary Particles* by Michel Houellebecq, translated by Frank Wynne

29 **OMER BARTOV** HITLER'S WILLING BELIEVERS *The Third Reich: A New History* by Michael Burleigh

38 **DAVID THOMSON** FOOL BRITANNIA *Mainly About Lindsay Anderson* by Gavin Lambert

40 **SARAH GAMBITO** POEM *Dear Elation,*

42 **JONATHAN CHAIT** WASHINGTON DIARIST: FALL GUY

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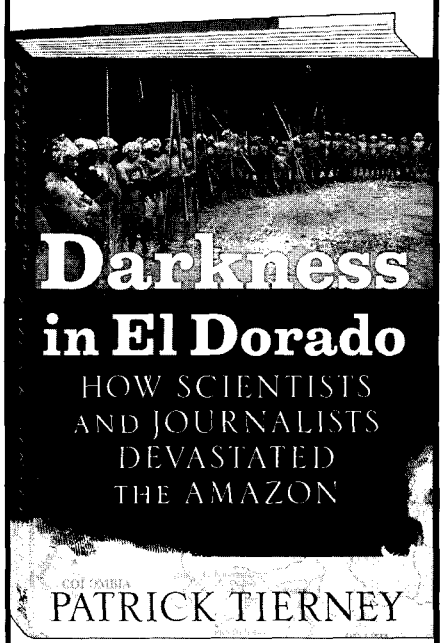

Darkness in El Dorado

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Defining down

TO THE EDITORS:

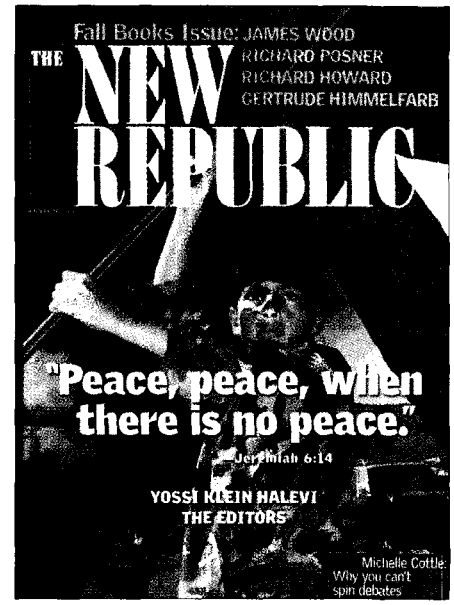
We are attorneys for Jonathan Pollard. We take strong issue with a statement in "The Courtship" (October 16) in which David Grann refers to Pollard as a "convicted traitor." Pollard has never been charged with or convicted of being a traitor. He was charged with and pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit espionage.

The distinction is significant. "Traitor" is defined in the law as one who commits treason. Treason entails aiding an enemy of the United States. For example, *Black's Law Dictionary* gives the primary definition of "traitor" as "[a] person who commits treason against his or her country." That same legal dictionary defines "treason" as "[t]he offense of attempting to overthrow the government of the state to which one owes allegiance, either by making war against the state or by materially supporting its enemies."

Pollard was charged with and pleaded guilty to conspiracy to deliver classified information to the state of Israel, an ally of the United States. He has never aided any enemy of the United States. The indictment filed against Pollard by the U.S. government does not charge him with treason, nor with intending to harm the United States. Your reference to him as a "convicted traitor" is totally unfounded.

You cannot justify your use of the word "traitor" on the ground that you intended the word to be understood in a colloquial sense rather than a legal sense. *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* defines "traitor" as "[o]ne who betrays one's country, a cause, or a trust, especially one who commits treason." That dictionary gives the primary definition of "treason" as "[v]iolation of allegiance toward one's country or sovereign, especially the betrayal of one's country by waging war against it or by consciously and purposely acting to aid its enemies." Thus, popular usage is consistent with legal usage. Even more significantly, you chose to preface the word "traitor" with the word "convicted." By phrasing it this way, you told your readers—falsely—that the courts have adjudicated Pollard guilty of treason.

As journalists, you have a responsibility to be accurate. Propagating factual misstatements about Pollard's crime does a disservice to your readers, who are entitled to know the truth. Pollard's sentencing proceeding was infected with falsehood and distortion, as well as with other fundamental defects, for which we have recently sought redress in the United States District Court. Because fact and not fiction, and truth and not distortion, are essential to correcting the injustice to Pollard, your deviation from the truth is very troubling.



We demand that you issue a public apology and a retraction of the accusation that Pollard is a "convicted traitor."

ELIOT LAUER
JACQUES SEMMELMAN
New York, New York

THE EDITORS REPLY:

As we stated in a letter to Eliot Lauer and Jacques Semmelman, we stand by David Grann's characterization of Jonathan Pollard as a "convicted traitor." A number of dictionary definitions of "traitor" say nothing about spying for an enemy. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition,* for instance, defines "traitor" as "one who betrays another's trust or is false to an obligation or duty." Even *Black's Law Dictionary,* which Lauer and Semmelman cite, has the following as one of its definitions of "traitor": "one who betrays a person, a cause, or an obligation." Lauer and Semmelman write, "You cannot justify your use of the word 'traitor' on the ground that you intended the word to be understood in a colloquial sense rather than a legal sense." But our use of the word is consistent with the broader and more popular definition found in many dictionaries, and, as a popular magazine, it is entirely appropriate for us to rely on such definitions. Lauer and Semmelman also conveniently fail to note that the very same paragraph to which they object includes the fact that Pollard spied for an ally. Needless to say, we consider neither an apology nor a retraction appropriate.

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Super highway

TO THE EDITORS:

Gregg Easterbrook ("Political Mileage, October 9) could not be more wrong about the Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles (PNGV). Experts in industry and academia expect this enormously successful private-public partnership to lead to dramatic reductions in oil imports and pollution and ensure that U.S. automakers maintain worldwide leadership in key technologies. Although the article is riddled with inaccuracies throughout, there are three major gaffes of which your readers should be aware.

First, Easterbrook asserts that the PNGV is nothing but a huge government throwaway program under which the taxpayers foot the bill for developing dead-end technologies. The facts say otherwise. Every dollar that the government has invested in the partnership has been matched by four dollars from the private sector—hardly an indication of government pork or corporate waste. More importantly, many of the technologies developed in this high-tech R&D program can already be seen on the road, including lighter materials (now incorporated into everything from Cadillacs to Jeeps) that drive down energy consumption while boosting mileage.

Second, Easterbrook's belief that the goal of an inexpensive family car getting 80 miles per gallon is "impossible" is depressingly shortsighted. General Motors, Ford, and DaimlerChrysler have all demonstrated cars this year that achieve between 70 mpg and 80 mpg, and the companies have made commitments to have cars or SUVs embodying PNGV technologies on the market by 2004.

Finally, the article mistakenly claims that the Japanese are leaving us in the dust of international competition, without their own government's sponsorship. There's little doubt that the PNGV program led directly to the Japanese effort. We are convinced that U.S.-produced vehicles developed through the PNGV will deliver better performance at a better price. But we welcome the competition.

The joint government-industry research sponsored under the PNGV has spurred innovations that will let us reduce oil imports and improve our environment. Moreover, the program ensures that revolutionary new automobile technologies likely to define world markets in the decades ahead will be developed and produced by U.S. companies. But don't just take my word for it. Listen to the independent voice of Trevor Jones, chairman of the National Research Council's Standing Committee to Review the Research Program of the PNGV: "PNGV has to date been an unqualified success, particularly so since it involved the automakers in high-risk research and development which would normally be beyond their radar horizon relevant to prudent investment guidelines."

The PNGV, and similar R&D partnership programs, enable the private sector to generate new knowledge and adopt novel technologies that ultimately lead to commercial success, increased jobs, and healthier and more productive lives for all Americans. They continue to be a source of pride and a hallmark of the Clinton-Gore administration's efforts to keep the United States at the forefront of scientific and technological capability.

NEAL LANE
Assistant to the President for Science and Technology
Washington, D.C.

GREGG EASTERBROOK REPLIES:

Neal Lane defends his administration as his portfolio requires him to do, but his statements are slippery. He asserts, for example, that technology from the administration's "supercar" project is already on the road, in cars that "drive down energy consumption while boosting mileage." But the overall mileage of cars and trucks sold in the United States has been declining in recent years—Lane can check his own administration's figures at *www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/studies/fuelecon/index.html#F24-1*. His statement that the Big Three have all "demonstrated" cars that achieve high mileage and "made commitments" to produce cars "embodying" such technology by the year 2004 is a model of slick wording. The demonstrators the Big Three have displayed are not intended for production; actual cars for sale in 2004 should have better mileage than those today but are unlikely to deliver the projected mileage per gallon. I'll bet $100 that there will be no family-size car, built by Detroit, for sale in 2004 that gets 80 mpg. I'd dearly love to be wrong and lose my c-note. Will Lane take the other side of the bet?

Democracy on paper

TO THE EDITORS:

You argued during the NATO bombing that Serbs have no separate identities,

continued on page 45

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Surreality

7:30 P.M. HEAD over to a friend's house, Moët and Chandon tucked under one arm, value pack of plain M&Ms under the other. As usual, I'm the only non-Democrat in the room, and as Florida is called for Gore, I suspect it's over. Eat cold pizza and get an asthma attack from my friend's kitten. On television, Mary Matalin says she's not sure Florida is a definite Gore win; she's clearly in denial. Pick up the champagne and schlepp back home through the crisp fall air. I reassure myself that Gore may tack from his campaign and govern from the center. Not so bad, after all.

10 p.m. Bush is on television in the governor's mansion, claiming he hasn't lost Florida. He looks depressed to me. "Pretty darn upbeat," he says, his raisinlike eyeballs disappearing into his head. Hmm. I check the vote count. Bush is way ahead! I don't know who to ask, so I instant-message Matt Drudge. "It's over?" I type. "Looks like it," the pixels gleam back, a few minutes later. "Gore's won?" I type back, just to make sure. "Probably," Drudge replies. Maybe the actual votes are skewed early to the Republicans, and that's why Florida still looks winnable. Then Tom Brokaw announces Florida is back in play! Unbelievable. Boyfriend goes to bed. I make calls and start pacing the room. Finally, Tennessee and West Virginia go to Bush. Are the networks being too cautious in their "too close to call" calls? Or not cautious enough? Check in on ABC News. George Stephanopoulos is the network's primary analyst. Mute the television and access the *New York Times* vote tallies on the Internet. Finally, some reality! It's at times like this that you learn to love the gray reliability of the *Times*.

2 a.m. The boyfriend and the beagle have passed out. I'm online, playing phone hockey with my editor. He won't concede. The Florida votes trickle in. At 96 percent, the odds of Gore overtaking Bush get a little more remote. Did someone script this? It's 1960 all over again. It almost looks as if someone were waiting to find out how many votes are needed to give the race back to Gore and sitting on the ballots to make it a squeaker. Rumors surface that a few thousand elderly Jews have mistakenly voted for Buchanan, like turkeys voting for Thanksgiving. It's the only comic relief. At 97 percent, a wad of votes gives Bush a clear lead. It's Bush! At this point, I would hardly care if it were Wayne Newton.

3 a.m. In bed now. I've taken my meds, had a double shot of Jägermeister, and plan on drifting off to the concession and victory speeches. A wave of relief floods over me. Through my boozy haze, I vaguely wonder why Gore hasn't appeared yet. It's pouring now in Austin and Nashville. Even the weather is having mood swings. I check the Florida numbers again. Hold on. Am I hallucinating? Someone hands Brokaw a sheet of paper. He says there are 500 votes between Bush and Gore. So it's come to this: Tim Russert with a Magic Marker and Tom Brokaw with a sheet of rumpled paper, gleaned from a website in Florida, telling the world it could still go to Gore. NBC retracts its Bush announcement. Dewey beats Truman, repeated as farce. I'm part horrified, but part thrilled. Television is so over. For years, the evil tube has assumed the mantle of the real world. When the networks call an election, it's over. But now the voters are actually insisting on being relevant! Ditto the Constitution. Suddenly, it dawns on us that this election will be decided by a recount in Florida, an electoral college, and maybe even Congress. It's the Founders versus Peter Jennings. Go Madison!

4:25 a.m. It's almost light outside, and we're in recount hell. Maybe it's the Jäger, but my paranoia starts taking off. Amazing details: missing vans, recalled ballot workers, mysteriously skewed polling samples, stories of broken voting machines, sheriffs' deputies dispatched to track down votes. You couldn't make this up. My own suspicions trend toward Clinton's usual political thugs. Could they have stuffed the ballots? Then I calm down. I'm listening to an election official in Florida talking about hundreds of votes coming in tomorrow from rural areas and an unspecified number of military absentee ballots; there is also talk of missing ballot boxes, and on and on. And now Bill Daley's on television! Kennedy beats Nixon, repeated as farce. Listening to Daley, I have to say, my jaw dropped. I expected a dignified, let's-wait-patiently-democracy-is-a-beautiful-thing kind of speech. But no. He's almost defiant. "Our campaign goes on!" he declares, as the crowd roars. Doesn't Daley realize that, whatever else has happened, the campaign is over? It's only vote-counting now. Or is this the apotheosis of the Clinton-Gore "permanent campaign"? Just when you think it can't get any cheesier, Terry McAuliffe, sleazebag-in-chief, is on camera. Who on earth in the Gore campaign thought he was the man to speak to the nation?

4:35 a.m. It's getting even weirder. What is Jonathan Alter talking about? He's almost inciting a coup! He just laid out a scenario in which Gore wins the national vote; loses Florida by a whisker, even after a recount; and then challenges W. to stand down! He wants civil war! The liberal chattering elites may be petit bourgeois Poujadists after all! I sure hope Gore has more class than they do. If Bush wins on the first ballot and a recount, he's clearly the winner. Period. Thank God many Democrats are on record as saying last week that they back the electoral college count over the popular vote. Hoisted by their own canard! But I still worry. If Gore were to fight this beyond a recount, the damage to the Constitution would be terrible. The opprobrium attached to the Clinton-Gore administration would become indelible. People will say Gore had less class than Nixon—which is why Gore surely won't try it. He's a decent, law-abiding, patriotic man. He'll obey the Constitution. Isn't that the oath he took? It's a horrible paradox, though. The proof that Gore could be a great president depends on his willingness to concede an ambiguous election. The proof that he'd be an unworthy president depends on his decision to fight too long for it.

1:30 p.m. The day after. I feel better. I put the Moët back in the fridge, untouched, and drink a gallon of coffee. It occurs to me in my caffeine rush that this was, in fact, a decisive vote. Whoever wins, the country wants the president-elect to govern from the dead center. W. has a mandate: to rescue the Republican Party from its recent descent into intolerance and extremism. Gore has a mandate: to drop the populism and negativism of his campaign and return to his New Democrat roots. Bush would find it a little easier, I suspect, because he campaigned as a uniter, not a divider, and he is probably better able to reach out to his opponents. But Gore could still rise to the occasion. I hope he does. What we need right now is what the voters said they most wanted in their next president: character. Both candidates now have a chance to prove they have it.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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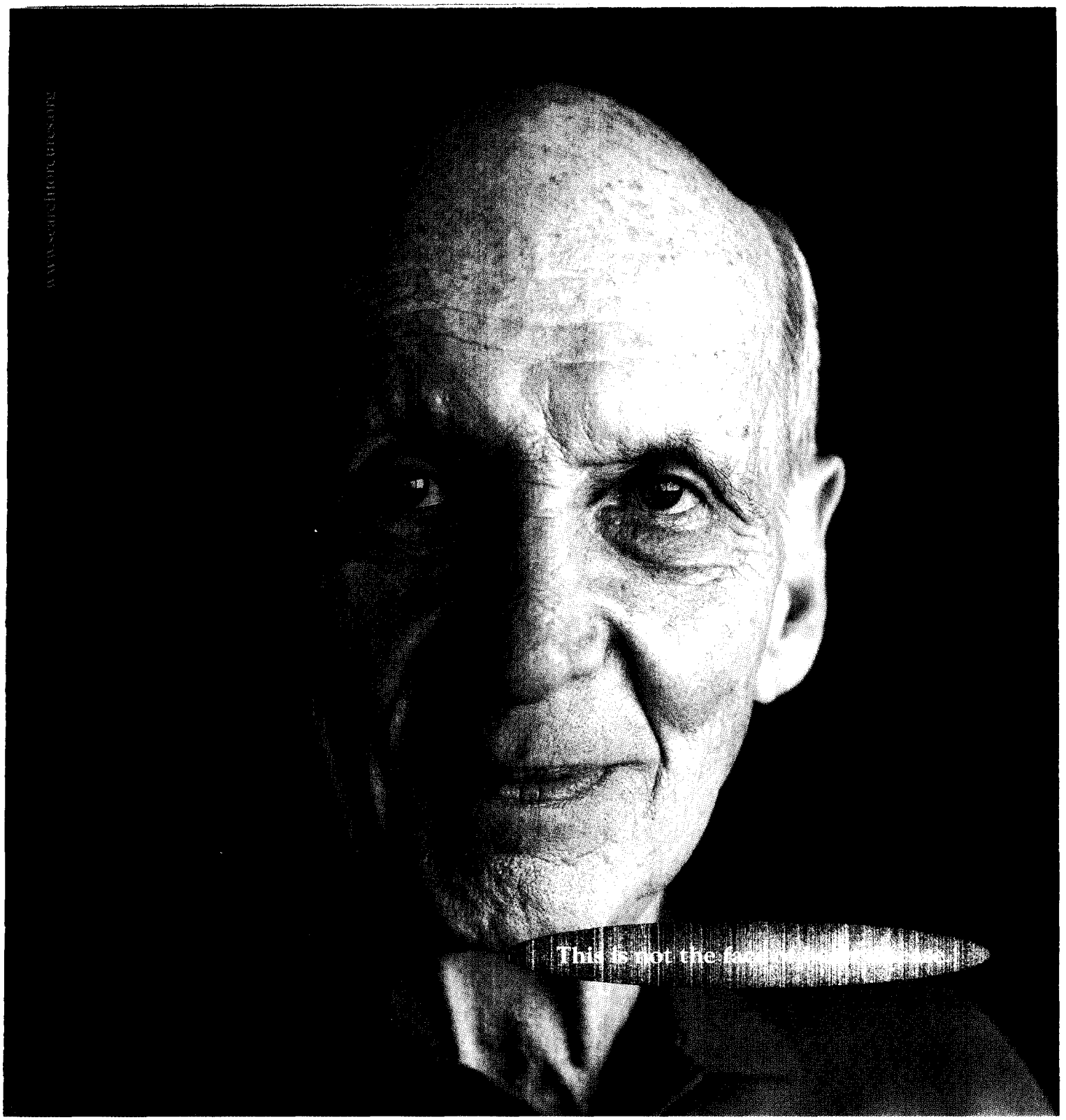

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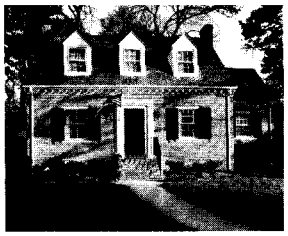

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?

IT IS AMAZING, the spectacle of this land of certainties plunged into complete uncertainty. Who will be the next president? As of this writing, nobody knows. The lack of clarity is excruciating, because the stakes are so high; and they are high not least because a protracted absence of clarity could throw the country into a constitutional crisis. (It's been a whole two years since the last one.) One thing, though, is clear: If George W. Bush has indeed won the electoral vote but lost the popular vote, he should be recognized as the lawful and legitimate president of the United States.

We are supporters of Al Gore, and we are obviously pleased he has won the support of a majority of the American people. If Gore is denied the presidency as a consequence of the archaism of the electoral college and the narcissism of Ralph Nader, the Bush presidency will correctly be viewed as a thwarting of the democratic will. Unlike Nader, however, the electoral college has been the American way. Like Jefferson, Lincoln, and Rutherford B. Hayes, all of whom failed to win clear popular majorities, Bush will have played by the constitutional rules and won.

An argument against the legitimacy of such a victory would be an argument against the legitimacy of the American arrangement for presidential elections. That arrangement is not a popular arrangement, in the strict sense; and there is no reason not to wonder about the justification of the electoral college and its weird complication of participatory democracy. Gore appears to have been denied an electoral majority in Florida by Nader's little adventure, but who knows how many more third parties would arise in a truly popular system? The paradigm of American politics would shift so dramatically with the abolition of the electoral college that it is impossible to know what the new campaigns would look like.

Still, the question of whether the electoral college should be abolished is not this week's question. Many people who are asking it this week would have grown hoarse in defense of the venerable system if the great drama had played differently, and it were Gore who lost the popular vote and won the electoral vote. One does not agitate for constitutional reform merely because one's own side is not doing brilliantly under the Constitution.

Both candidates knew the rules of the election. Indeed, those rules determined their campaign strategies. Since every state save Maine and Nebraska uses a winner-take-all formula, every vote beyond the winning vote for Gore in, say, Massachusetts or for Bush in, say, Texas does not count. For this reason, candidates skip the states that seem to have made up their minds, and lavish their attentions on the suspenseful states, the ones that are closely divided. (That is why the "undecideds" became the celebrities of the season.) If there were no electoral college and each vote counted equally, Bush would have run up his vote in Texas and Gore would have run up his vote in New York. Both candidates would have conducted national campaigns rather than regional ones, and they would have adjusted their messages accordingly. As a practical matter, pandering would be a little harder.

Yet electoral abuses are another matter. This, too, should be absolutely clear. There must be no extenuation of any irregularity in any local or national ballot. In the coming weeks, there may be challenges to the legitimacy of contested ballots in Florida and other states. We do not yet know enough about the specific allegations of voter fraud and error to know how seriously to take them. (A Jewish vote for Buchanan in Florida? Not even the phenomenon of Jewish self-hatred can explain such a showing.) And after their pathetic performance on election night—Florida is in the Gore column! Florida is in the Bush column!—the wise men and women of the networks should stifle their instant wisdom until some empirical truths about the election are established, and by more rigorous and more circumspect authorities than pollsters and pundits.

All credible allegations, all Democratic allegations and all Republican allegations, should be vigorously investigated by state and federal officials, so that they can be resolved rightly and swiftly. Neither the candidates nor the country will be served by protracted legal challenges involving the kinds of political questions in which judges are properly reluctant to intervene. And such challenges pose larger social dangers, if they come to pit one segment of society against another, and leave behind ugly insinuations of conspiracy. ("We were violated with our rights to vote," Reverend Jesse Jackson intemperately proclaimed about reports of "intimidation" at certain polling places in Florida. "This is a replay of Selma, Alabama, all over again.") The fairness of the election is just as important, and in some ways it is even more important, than the outcome of the election. Anyway, who ever said that civics lessons were pleasant? ■

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NOTEBOOK

FOOL ME TWICE: "Sip it, savor it, cup it, Photostat it, underline it in red, press it in a book, put it in [an] album, hang it on a wall: George Bush is the next president of the United States."—Dan Rather, November 8, 2:30 a.m.

"CBS News has now, for the second time tonight, pulled back Florida."—Dan Rather, November 8, 3:30 a.m.

WHEN BANALITIES BOUNCE BACK: "One of these people tomorrow will be called the president-elect." —Doris Kearns Goodwin, speaking on NBC, November 7

PRECRIMINATIONS: Give Ed Rendell credit for one thing: He was consistent to the bitter end. As chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Rendell this year earned a reputation as the Gore campaign's most relentlessly off-message spokesman (see "Local Hero," by Bryan Curtis, October 23). So it was hardly surprising when, on election night, Rendell became the first prominent Democrat to jump ship. What was surprising, though, was that he did it while Gore was still very much in the race—even before Florida had been prematurely awarded to Bush. In an election-night interview with ABC's Peter Jennings, Rendell offered his candid thoughts on the Gore campaign's missteps. "Do I personally think that Bill Clinton could have made a difference if he was out there a little more in Arkansas?" Rendell asked himself. "For sure. Do I think he might have made a difference in Ohio? I think he might have." Do we think Ed Rendell might have been a better party chairman if he'd kept his mouth shut from time to time? For sure.

WITH BOOSTERS LIKE THIS: "Our biggest concern is ballot fraud. It's like the banana republic of Arkansas in an election.... [I] thought about calling Jimmy Carter in to see if he could come monitor our elections. He goes to Central America to do that. Come to Arkansas."—Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, November 6, on the "Imus in the Morning" radio show

BUSH'S WEEK

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THIRD REICH IN A SQUEAKER: "I'm told in 1923, Adolf Hitler became chairman of the Nazi Party in Germany by one vote. If not, maybe there wouldn't have been a Holocaust, maybe there wouldn't have been a World War II. We'll never know that."—Colorado Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, addressing a Bush rally in Dearborn, Michigan, on the importance of voting, November 4

OVERREACH: The Bush campaign has gotten loads of credit for its kinder, gentler approach to minorities. In particular, many commentators have praised the Bushies' outreach to Hispanics. Perhaps they should read what some of that outreach says. The RNC's Spanish-language website (*www.rnc.org/enespanol/*) prominently features an article by National Catholic Register correspondent Joshua Mercer that asks rhetorically, "[*E*]*s pecado votar por Al Gore*?" ("Is it a sin to vote for Al Gore?") Further down on the website is an August 20 article, reprinted from the Mexican news agency Notimex, that argues that the Democratic Party, ever since Jimmy Carter's presidency, "*sólo atiende a los afroestadunidenses*"—or, in English, caters only to African Americans—at the expense of "*la minoría latina*." And, to top it off, there's RNC Chairman Jim Nicholson, who in a press release on the site blasts Gore for fraternizing with groups like the National Abortion Rights Action League and Women Leaders Online, which he calls "*dos grupos anti-católicos*." Perhaps we'd all be better off if the GOP reached out a little less.

UNFORTUNATE CONSTRUCTION: "When my opponent, Governor Bush, says he will appoint strict constructionists to the Supreme Court, I often think of the strictly constructionist meaning that was applied when the Constitution was written, how some people were considered three-fifths of a human being."—Al Gore, speaking to a rally in Pittsburgh, November 4

THE LAST WORD: "They misunderestimated me."
—George W. Bush, November 6 ■

GORE'S WEEK

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France 1, America 0. Surrender

By LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN

BILL CLINTON NEEDS a foreign policy legacy. Fast. It won't be peace in the Middle East. And, with the administration's announcement this week that the president won't visit North Korea anytime soon, it won't be there, either. Iran has yet to reciprocate a steady stream of blandishments and diplomatic carrots. Further down the list, we're told, there's always the civil war in Sri Lanka. But no one's heard of Sri Lanka. That leaves one more possibility: America's bitterest rival and most caustic detractor, a rogue state with no equal. The Clinton team's legacy may lie with France.

With the end of the Clinton era only weeks away, the administration last month dropped earlier reservations and endorsed a controversial French-led effort to establish a pan-European army. It's a lousy idea that, if realized, could torpedo NATO. Yet, in a major address to NATO defense ministers last month, Secretary of Defense William Cohen dispensed with his earlier skepticism, flatly declaring that Washington now supports the European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI)—"not grudgingly, not with resignation, but with wholehearted conviction." NATO, he conceded, would no longer be the only force guarding Europe's security. The speech was a "green light" to the Europeans, says a senior State Department official: "If this is serious, we'll be cheering on the sidelines." In response, the French defense minister announced he was "profoundly delighted"; France plans to host a conference later this month at which members of the European Union will pledge forces to their new army.

Members of the Clinton team say they've changed their tune for three reasons. First, in recent months the French have been behaving themselves. France currently holds the EU's rotating presidency and wants to show its fellow Europeans that it can act responsibly. The British, too, have admonished French officials to temper their anti-American rhetoric. Second, Pentagon and State Department officials say the Europeans will pursue ESDI with or without American support; hence, the United States will have more influence if it drops its objections.

Third and most important, the administration—under pressure from Republican isolationists in Congress and embarrassed by Europe's inept performance during the war in Kosovo, in which U.S. planes flew more than 70 percent of the combat sorties—has been pressing the Europeans to boost their military capabilities. And if the only way to make them do that is through a force with no ties to America, so be it, say Pentagon and State Department officials. "[T]he Europeans have to wrap up their spending increases and requests in the garb of a European defense identity," Cohen explains. "If they have to use the rhetoric in order to get support from their constituents for greater defense spending, we support that."

Problem is, the Europeans don't see it that way. And, until recently, neither did we. Last October, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, for example, worried about an army "that initially duplicates NATO but that could eventually compete with NATO." The two organizations, the Clinton team worried, were fundamentally incompatible: ESDI would drain valuable resources away from NATO and undermine the entire rationale for its existence.

The Clintonites also feared, rightly, that an independent European army would give teeth to the anti-Americanism enjoying a vogue in Europe's capitals. In January, before the United States threw its support behind ESDI, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright warned the Europeans not to use the force to "decouple" from the United States and decried "voices—some strident, others quite subtle—who seek to divide Europe from America." In a similar vein, Ron Asmus, who earlier this year left his post as deputy assistant secretary for European affairs, cautioned about "voices in Europe that say ESDI is about creating more distance between Europe and America—it's about reducing American influence on the Continent." Even today, U.S. officials privately concede that "reducing American influence" is what the project's architects plainly intend.

They're right. French President Jacques Chirac routinely inveighs against "American hegemony" and has even summoned China to join France in a "march toward multipolarity." His foreign minister, Hubert Vedrine, has complained of "the overriding predominance of the United States in all areas and the current lack of any counterweight." And his colleague Defense Minister Alain Richard touts ESDI as a means to foster transatlantic "equilibrium." Coming from the French, of course, this sort of rhetoric is nothing new. They've been promoting an autonomous European army since the 1960s, when Charles de Gaulle, in a fit of resentment against the Americans who liberated his country, pulled France out of NATO's integrated military command.

More worrisome is that such opinions are no longer the exclusive property of the French. Belgium's defense minister, Jean-Paul Poncelet, makes the case for ESDI with the rhetorical query, "Can we construct a political structure in Europe and have its defense depend on its main competitor [i.e., the United States]?" Answering the question, EU defense czar Javier Solana says the aim is to establish a "new equilibrium between Europe and the United States," while Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok foresees Europe transforming itself into a "counterweight to the United States."

And Europe's leaders are translating this sentiment into policy. The French and the Germans have mercilessly bullied their Eastern European neighbors, who have expressed reservations that the new force may undermine the alliance these newly liberated countries just joined. According to a State Department memo, earlier this year Chirac and German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer took turns upbraiding Bronislaw Geremek, then Poland's foreign minister, for his worries. Chirac is said to have asked Geremek whether he wanted Poland to be America's "fifty-first" state, while Fischer tutored him on the need to be a "good European." And, in a not-so-

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veiled threat, Vedrine sniffed that, if allowed to join the EU, the Eastern Europeans might serve as a "U.S. Trojan horse." "We want a European defense structure in harmony with America. The French want a structure that is a rival," a senior Polish official complained to *The Washington Post*. "[T]hey're asking us if we want to be a colony of America." So concerned was the State Department about these reports that Albright warned the Europeans not to "discriminate" against NATO members who do not belong to the EU. And Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Marc Grossman confirmed, "There are some people who are demanding that EU candidates in Eastern Europe choose somehow between Europe and the transatlantic relationship."

The danger isn't that a European force will become America's military rival. To begin with, the Europeans couldn't fight their way out of a pastry shop (recall how the Bosnian Serbs tied Europe's hapless peacekeepers to telephone poles for kicks). And, if less pliant than they were during the cold war, the Western Europeans are still, after all, our allies.

The danger, rather, is that the Europeans—the French, in particular—will use their newfound military autonomy as a bargaining chip to diminish American influence on the Continent and frustrate U.S. foreign policy more broadly. America's global clout derives largely from its preponderance of military power, and, to the extent that ESDI lessens it, U.S. influence will decrease as well. Conversely, the political heft the Europeans would derive from an independent army would give their preferences greater weight in international affairs. That's not only bad for America, it's bad for the world. France's preferences, after all, include flirting with Iraq and Iran, turning a blind eye to genocide in Bosnia and Rwanda, routinely siding with China and Russia at the United Nations, and inveighing against Israel.

Are the Republicans upset that the Clintonites have acquiesced to a French power grab? Not at all. In fact, most of them think the administration is moving too *slowly* to relinquish America's say in Europe's military affairs. Judging from the campaign rhetoric of George W. Bush and his foreign policy advisers, a Bush administration would probably be even more supportive of ESDI than its predecessor. But this is one legacy America—and, with the exception of France, everyone else—can do without. ■

Jerusalem Dispatch

Power of Myth

By GERSHOM GORENBERG

NOT LONG AGO, I wanted to visit the Temple Mount, a.k.a. Al-Haram al-Sharif. So I called the office of Sheik Muhammad Hussein, director of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which perches atop it. In principle, the world's most contested holy place is open to Jewish visitors, but at tense times—like these—an escort from the director of Al-Aqsa can ease a journalist's way past the Israeli cops. This time, however, even the sheik's hospitality wasn't enough. The Haram is closed to non-Muslims, an aide explained. Was that the decision of Muslim authorities or Israeli police? I asked. "No one but us," the aide told me, "makes decisions about Al-Aqsa."

I hung up and called a contact at Israel's Internal Security Ministry. The closure, he admitted, violated Israel's policy of free access, but, since Ariel Sharon's late-September visit sparked a new intifada, tensions have been too high to risk further provocation. And whose decision was the closure? I inquired for a second time. "It's a police decision," he said, surprised I'd ask.

The incident epitomized the conundrum of the Temple Mount. The two sides, after all, agreed on the practical question of whether I could go. What they fundamentally disagreed about was not real-world control but ideological control. What mattered was not whether I could visit the Mount but who had the authority to say no.

It's a point not always understood by the hardheaded diplomats who see myths and symbols as obstacles to real-world problem-solving. Because at the Temple Mount symbolism does not complicate the problem—it *is* the problem. The Oslo process assumed that if Israelis and Palestinians could solve the concrete issues of land, troops, water, and administration, the ideological issues would somehow take care of themselves. After diplomatic failures and the violence of recent weeks, that assumption has been proved dead wrong. To revive the search for peace, the negotiators will have to face the ideological conflict squarely. Such a conversation, if it is possible, will start and end at the same place: the Temple Mount.

The Mount's power is usually ascribed to history: It's where the First and Second Temples stood in ancient times, making it the holiest site in Judaism. But "sacred history" is the real issue. Jewish tradition considers the Mount the spot where Abraham nearly sacrificed Isaac—a "fact" my children learned in Israeli elementary schools—and where, according to rabbinic tradition, God created Adam. To Muslims, it's the "farthest mosque"—*al-masjid al-aqsa*—where Muhammad arrived on a winged steed before ascending to heaven. According to a tradition, or hadith, ascribed to the prophet, the Haram was also the site of the world's second mosque, built by Adam 40 years after he erected the mosque in Mecca.

Sacred history isn't subject to objective evidence; unlike old border disputes, it can't be resolved by finding colonial maps in archives. Citing the number of times "Jerusalem" appears in the Bible—as William Safire did in a recent column—is no more likely to erase Muslim ties to the city than quoting hadith literature is to convince Jews to forget Zion. Israeli right-wingers like to point out that the Koran never uses the word "Jerusalem." But neither do the five books of Moses, the part of the Bible most important to Jews—and both textual arguments are irrelevant. What

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matters is what today's Jews and Muslims, Israelis and Palestinians, believe about the city's past.

And what they believe about its future. For the Mount doesn't only stand for history's beginning; it also stands for its conclusion. After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D., Judaism assigned the Third Temple to the time of the Messiah. Islam also places the great events of the last days in Jerusalem. After Jesus, in the guise of a triumphant Muslim prophet, returns and defeats the unbelievers, the dead will rise and be judged in the valley east of the Haram. The Dome of the Chain, a small structure near the Dome of the Rock at the Haram's center, is where the just and the damned will be separated.

SINCE THE TEMPLE MOUNT is so steeped in myth, it's hardly a surprise that the Israel-Palestinian struggle is more over symbolic than practical possession. For Israelis, the defining moment of the Six Day War was Colonel Motta Gur's radioed message "The Temple Mount is in our hands." In secular eyes, conquering the Mount meant completing the return to Zion. Among Orthodox Zionists, it was proof that the state was a harbinger of the Messiah.

But, once it had declared its authority over the site, Israel left the Islamic shrines not only untouched but under the administration of an Islamic trust, or *Waqf*—tied first to Jordan and later to the Palestinian Authority. Israel stipulated that Jews had the right to visit the Mount but in practice barred them from worshiping on it. Instead, Israeli authorities imposed a de facto partition—deliberately making the Western Wall, rather than the Mount itself, the focus of religious and national ceremony.

And, not surprisingly, a compromise that partially acknowledged their practical claims but denied their symbolic ones has not satisfied the Palestinians. Intact by the whim of an illegitimate ruler, Al-Aqsa has become the locus of Muslim fears and the embodiment of everything Palestinians have lost and seek to regain. Enter an office in East Jerusalem or the West Bank and you're likely to find an aerial photograph of the Haram. The radical wing of the Islamic movement in Israel holds an "Al-Aqsa Is In Danger" rally every September, drawing tens of thousands of Israeli Arabs. And the movement has spearheaded a series of renovations at the Haram. The first involved turning a set of underground vaults known as Solomon's Stables into a prayer hall. Explains movement activist Ahmad Agbariya, "Information reached [us] that the Jews wanted to turn it into a synagogue." *Waqf* authorities maintain an intermittent dialogue with Israeli officials, but, to maintain their ideological purity, they adamantly deny doing so.

In fact, rather than dampening Muslim fears about the Temple Mount, three decades of practical compromise seem to have stoked them. Since the late '80s, says American researcher David Cook, a wave of apocalyptic books has appeared in the Muslim world. They mix Islamic traditions about the hour of divine judgment with the anti-Semitic poison of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and prophecies lifted from Christian fundamentalists. They describe the machinations of a Jewish Antichrist, the *dajjal*, who, in history's last days, will dwell in the Temple. "The building of [the Temple] ... will begin after the destruction of Al-Aqsa," says Egyptian writer Sa'id Ayyub's *The Antichrist*, the original book in the genre, "and the planned date for this is 2000." Other books repeat the prediction. The books, Cook noted in a 1998 article, are widely popular and "bode ill for the final status negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority," which could easily be cast as a demonic bid to control the Muslims and build the Temple. "As much as possible, politicians and diplomats need not to make matters worse by uttering inflammatory statements," Cook wrote. The warning required taking myth seriously as a political factor. Predictably, it was ignored.

AND IT'S NOT just the Palestinians. For a small but growing number of Israelis, as well, the perception that Israel is accommodating Muslim claims to the Mount is intolerable. A handful of activists on the Israeli radical right had indeed hoped to turn Solomon's Stables into a Jewish prayer site. They saw the effort as an interim step: Their real goal is building the Temple. The Movement for the Establishment of the Temple, one of several such organizations, claims 250 dues-paying members and a list of 10,000 sympathizers. When Charles Krauthammer wrote in *Time* several years ago that "[t]here are about as many Israelis who want to tear down Al-Aqsa and build the Temple as there are Americans who believe they've flown on UFOs," I considered upping my estimate of UFO enthusiasts. Krauthammer's subtext was "What I consider absurd is irrelevant"—the common, dangerous mistake when it comes to the Mount.

And, indeed, the Temple activists are not political pariahs. In 1995, Benjamin Netanyahu—then the opposition candidate for prime minister—wrote a letter to activist Yehudah Etzion promising that, if elected, he'd arrange for Jewish prayer on the Mount. Netanyahu was apparently unperturbed that Etzion served five years in prison in the '80s for crimes that included conspiring to blow up the Dome of the Rock, or that he continues to call for removing the Dome. It was a campaign promise not kept. But it was the kind of gesture that stokes Muslim fears—as was Netanyahu's choice of gifts when, as prime minister, he met with a local archbishop: a silver relief of Jerusalem depicting the Temple in place of the Muslim shrines.

Is it any surprise, then, that the peace process collapsed not over one of several tremendously complex practical issues but over symbolic claims to the Mount? At the start of the Camp David summit, Israel and the Palestinians made progress on borders, demilitarization, even refugees. But by the third day, according to Israeli expert Menachem Klein, who has tracked the talks from both the Israeli and the Palestinian perspective, Jerusalem was the only subject left on the table, with the status of the Temple Mount a crucial sticking point. Ehud Barak offered de jure Palestinian administration of the holy site under Israeli sovereignty. Yasir Arafat demanded exclusive Palestinian sovereignty. And that is where the summit broke down.

After Camp David, the Barak government and American intermediaries suggested compromises, such as sharing sov-

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ereignty or declaring the Mount under "divine sovereignty." Arafat's sole concession was to suggest "Islamic sovereignty" under the Islamic Conference Organization.

But that only underscored the problem: The Palestinians refused to acknowledge any Jewish connection to the site, a position that exasperated even left-wing Israelis. It made the denial of Jews' historical roots in their homeland into the central Palestinian negotiating point. By dismissing the Jewish past, Arafat focused Israeli public attention on the Mount and invited Ariel Sharon to use the spot's symbolism for his own statement of ownership.

Before Sharon's visit, Jibril Rajub, head of the Palestinian Authority's Preventative Security Agency in the West Bank, cautioned in an interview with Israeli radio that it could have explosive impact. Barak's problem was the political cost within Israel of preventing the visit: Sharon would be affirming Jewish ownership of a national symbol; Barak would be surrendering it.

And just as the Mount's symbolic power forced Barak to permit Sharon's visit, it brought Palestinians by the thousands into the streets in response. Just as the symbolic drama killed the Camp David summit in July, in September it started a mini-war.

Now, after six weeks of violence and close to 200 deaths, many analysts insist that the negotiators must ignore the Mount and restart the peace process without it. That would be a mistake. It would ignore the lessons of these awful few months: All discussions of the Mount are symbolic discussions, and no peace process that ignores the symbolic issues can hope to succeed.

If Israel and the Palestinians want to postpone discussions of the Mount, there is only one way to do it: They must acknowledge that such a postponement would itself be a symbolic statement, an acceptance that neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians can negate the other's claim to God's mountain. Such a compromise is harder than compromising on land, refugees, guns, or even the practical supervision of the Mount itself. Which is precisely why it is essential to peace. ■

Newark Dispatch

Knock and Drag

By Ryan Lizza

Regena Thomas is not a speechwriter or a campaign manager. She doesn't craft political ads or appear on the Sunday talk shows. Even among political junkies, she's virtually unknown. But she's one of the most important Democratic Party operatives in the country. In fact, Thomas—along with others like her—is a big reason the Democrats have now exceeded expectations in three consecutive national elections.

Thomas gets black voters to the polls. With her help and $65 million, Jon Corzine won a New Jersey Senate seat this week; Al Gore took the state's 15 electoral votes going away. And Thomas's turnout operation, developed in New Jersey, has been replicated to similar effect across the country. Programs in Philadelphia and Detroit helped Gore win crucial swing states Pennsylvania and Michigan. In New York, Hillary Clinton's turnout program helped her crush Rick Lazio by twelve points, with black turnout increasing 2 percent relative to the 1998 Senate race. In all-important Florida, black turnout jumped from 10 percent in 1996 to 16 percent this year, even though blacks make up just 13 percent of the voting-age population. In Missouri, another swing state, black turnout jumped seven points from 1996. "Black turnout was astronomical," says Thomas, who, in addition to New Jersey, worked on turnout programs in Missouri, Delaware, Michigan, Florida, and Virginia. "Our margins of victory were in urban areas."

Democrats have a simple phrase that sums up their voter-turnout effort: "knock and drag." A crew of paid workers storms through predominantly black neighborhoods and coaxes, cajoles, or browbeats every registered voter to the polls. It's a form of political activity that was well-known in the big-city, white-ethnic machines of the past but has only recently emerged as a key to black turnout. In 1989, the late Ron Brown, then the newly appointed chairman of the Democratic National Committee, introduced a revolutionary way to conduct Democratic campaigns, which he called the "coordinated campaign." It required all the candidates on the Democratic ticket in each state to pool a portion of their resources for a joint effort to turn out Democratic voters. In 1989 test races in New Jersey and Virginia, the plan was a startling success, and it became the model used to elect Bill Clinton and Al Gore in 1992. After the 1994 Republican landslide, when the Democratic base stayed home, the party refined the concept, dispatching a team of consultants to New Jersey to poll and conduct focus groups with black voters. "The reason that we came to New Jersey is that New Jersey's African American voters have a reputation for being historically one of the toughest African American electorates in the country," says Ron Lester, a black pollster and Corzine consultant. In 1996, Thomas put the model to work for Democratic Representative Robert Torricelli, who was locked in a dead-heat Senate race with Republican Richard Zimmer. But on Election Day Torricelli won by ten points. His margin came almost entirely from black voters. New Jersey Democrats had found the key to electoral victory.

The following year, applying the turnout techniques of the Torricelli campaign, Democrat Jim McGreevey came from nowhere to within 26,000 votes of unseating popular Governor Christie Todd Whitman, with Whitman's share of the black vote dropping eight points from her 1993 race. A study comparing the tight 1997 race to Whitman's 1993 victory over Democrat Jim Florio—who had no black turnout program—is treated like a state secret within the party. "It's remarkable," says Corzine campaign manager Stephan DeMicco, who declined to share a copy of the study with me. "It's got too much strategic power for us.... The study of '93

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to '97 has resulted in whole new approaches to electoral targeting for us. The lessons that we learned from that study ... are being applied in many other states now."

"We actually call it ... the New Jersey Plan," says Thomas, who, like DeMicco, is a veteran of New Jersey campaigns going back to 1996. "When we go to Georgia, they will tell you, it's the New Jersey Plan." Thomas, along with three other prominent black Democratic women—Gore campaign manager Donna Brazile; Bill Clinton's political director, Minyon Moore; and Allison McLaurin of the Democratic Governor's Association—has taken the lead in promoting the turnout model within the party. The four call themselves "The Colored Girls Club."

TWO NIGHTS BEFORE Election Day, I find Thomas in a tiny office in downtown Newark. Scattered about are signs reading AFRICAN-AMERICANS FOR GORE-LIEBERMAN and STAY OUT THE BUSHES. On the floor are two six-inch stacks of checks made out in the amounts of $50 and $75—daily pay for part-time and full-time campaign workers, respectively. At her desk, Thomas is poring over pages and pages of numbers on what are called "vote goal sheets." It looks for all the world like a thrown-together, backroom operation.

But, despite its crude, low-tech appearance, Thomas's procedure is very sophisticated. "We start with this," Thomas says, tossing me a thick report titled "Electoral Targeting With Vote Goals." It comes from a Washington-based organization called the National Committee for an Effective Congress (NCEC), a little-known, left-leaning operation that provides the Democratic Party and labor unions with electoral data. NCEC's state reports include vital information about the voting history and trends of every precinct. In addition, they provide Thomas with a special precinct-by-precinct report on African American and Latino voting patterns. Using the two reports, Thomas decides which precincts to apply the base turnout model to; then, she develops a vote goal for each of those precincts on Election Day. "This is their playbook, their bible," she says, showing me a list of targeted precincts. "All my municipal coordinators have this." The sheet shows each precinct's registered voters, turnout history, Democratic performance, and, most important, vote goal. Precincts where turnout is low but Democratic performance is high are marked in red, since they constitute prime knock-and-drag territory on Election Day. Thomas points out Atlantic City's Ward One, Precinct Two as an example: Historically, 82 percent of the precinct's vote is Democratic, but the turnout is a relatively low 40 percent. "I got to bring that [40 percent figure] up," she says.

Once targeted districts are identified, Thomas begins a pre-program consisting of direct mail, phone calls, and visits to voters' homes. In the precinct mentioned above, for example, the Democrats sent six mailings to the 799 households that NCEC had identified there. Crafting the mailings constituted a challenge, because Gore generated only tepid support among African Americans and George W. Bush proved a difficult man to demonize. And so Democrats did what they so often do when it comes to the black vote: They called the Republicans racist. One flyer featured Bush against the backdrop of a Confederate flag. Mail on behalf of Corzine said his opponent, Bob Franks, "thinks it's OK to teach our kids in trailers" and "will be hazardous to your family's health." But the most effective piece of mail sent to black voters targeted a Republican who isn't even running this year: It showcased the infamous picture of a smiling Whitman frisking a black man with his arms spread against a wall. "Republicans Like Governor Whitman Think Racial Profiling Is a Joke," the caption read.

In addition to these mailings, Thomas hit black voters with live phone calls urging them to vote. On the Monday before the election, voters were given a reminder call; on Election Day itself, a massive phone bank operated from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. "Those phones are on a continual cycle," Thomas says. "The only way [a voter] comes out of the cycle is if [he] answers the phone." When a district is performing below Thomas's expectations, she can immediately retarget the phones, increasing calls to that area.

All this is supplemented by a radio and TV campaign that reaches saturation levels in the days leading up to the election. To listen to hip-hop and R&B stations the day before Election Day is to experience relentless political bombardment. "Republicans will roll back the progress Clinton has achieved," cautions one ad. In another, Jesse Jackson urges voters to take Tuesday off from work, warning, "All that Dr. King achieved can be overturned in one Supreme Court session." Minutes later Hillary Clinton is on the air talking about racial profiling and insisting, "If you stick with me, I'll stick with you." Next up is her husband, the president, with a paid ad making the case for Gore, Joe Lieberman, Corzine, and Hillary. Seconds later, Bill Clinton is back on the same station, this time for a live interview. "When they target the black community," says Thomas aide Rahman "Rock" Muhammad, "they target the black community."

THE NIGHT BEFORE the election, I tag along on a bus trip to put up posters in Newark. The organization doing the postering is called the Labor Action Committee, a group of black turnout specialists that the Corzine campaign has hired to rack up huge margins in majority-black cities in Essex County, such as Newark and Orange. The Labor Action Committee is run by James Benjamin, a union man and veteran of New Jersey campaigns who decided to privatize his operation and cash in on the Corzine spending spree.

Volunteers seem a thing of the past, at least in the Corzine campaign, which essentially operated as a low-paying jobs program for thousands of people across New Jersey. Where exactly all these workers came from became a campaign issue in the final days of the race, when *The New York Times* discovered that many were being shipped in from homeless shelters and drug-rehab centers in Pennsylvania. Most of the men I spent time with had no discernible affinity for Gore, Corzine, or any other Democrat. Nor is there much in the way of on-the-job cheer: During the ride to Newark, the team leader, Bruce, scolds everyone because two staple guns went missing the night before. "No one is getting paid if one is missing tonight," he says. He warns the workers that they can

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be easily replaced because "there are plenty of folks who want to do what we do." When he asks if there are any questions, the only response is, "When do we get paid?" Later, an argument breaks out on the bus over who is assigned to what job. Apparently those who put up posters earn $5 more than those who distribute literature, and several men who want to do poster detail are told they can't. "You can't even buy a bag of weed with five dollars," a guy behind me laughs.

But, in the end, the blanket coverage—the mail, calls, ads, and posters—is still only a warm-up for the ground game that Thomas has planned for 559 African American precincts on Election Day. I spend November 7 with Benjamin's Labor Action Committee, which has 39 vehicles and hundreds of paid workers covering Essex County.

The operation works like this: Benjamin assigns a watcher to the polls in each targeted district; those poll watchers report vote counts back to headquarters every two hours. There, in the "count room," staffers monitor the returns and decide which precincts are meeting their goals and which aren't. When a precinct is underperforming, Benjamin can increase phone calls to people in that precinct or send in a team of "flushers" to knock-and-drag voters to the polls. Meanwhile, sound trucks roam the targeted precincts, playing music and urging people to go to the polls.

Things go smoothly throughout the morning and early afternoon, with most precincts meeting or exceeding expectations. But, at about 2:30 p.m., Benjamin gets a phone call that throws him into a panic. Rushing into the phone-bank room, he yells, "All calls into Newark! Turnout is not as high as it should be." Minutes later, he begins sending teams into Newark and nearby Irvington. "We're going to do a pullout," he announces. We jump into a minivan and race to a satellite office in Irvington, where we are met by dozens of Benjamin's workers. Benjamin shouts a request into his cell phone, and 50 students from Seton Hall University are on their way to reinforce his ranks. Benjamin collects everyone in a parking lot and dispatches them into the field in small teams. "Understand the mission," he instructs his flushers. "The mission is to get a registered voter out of their home and to the polls. Ladies and gentlemen, we are in very bad shape. I want you to load up on everything that moves." He then takes aside a sound-truck driver and traces a route for him to follow. Minutes later, the teams are blanketing the streets, knocking on doors and dragging out voters.

After Benjamin has dispersed his forces, he takes me with him for a quick check of the other field offices, including one responsible for turning out the vote in Newark's housing projects. (In one of these projects, Corzine's outreach effort consisted largely of having his photo taken with a popular resident nicknamed Big Mama. "It's simple: Take a picture of Jon and Big Mama," Thomas explained to the *Newark Star-Ledger*, "put it on a flier. Nothing fancy.")

I return to Thomas's headquarters around 6:00 p.m. to find her laughing and talking on the phone. Having left the Newark operation to Benjamin, she spent the day in the southern part of the state, strengthening the turnout effort in places like Trenton. "I just got back from South Jersey," she says into the receiver. "There's a precinct down there that never ever got over ninety-two [voters]. They were at one hundred two at one p.m." When I tell her about the trouble in Newark, she phones the Corzine war room and has the latest results sent over. They show that at 5:00 p.m. all her precincts were on target to meet or exceed their goals. She has just helped win New Jersey for Gore and elect Corzine to the U.S. Senate.

In fact, Thomas tells me, those were just her public vote goals. She actually has two sets of targets: the set she gave to her coordinators and a set with even higher vote goals that she kept to herself. Well, not completely to herself; she privately challenged Benjamin to meet the higher goals. "Me and Benjamin have a thousand-dollar bounty internally on this," she admits. When I ask if she owes Benjamin $1,000, she smiles and nods her head. ■

Election night with the guys who screwed Gore.

Race Neutral

By Michael Crowley

Ralph Nader has long insisted he doesn't care whether Al Gore or George W. Bush wins the presidency. And, at 12:45 a.m. on election night, I was beginning to believe him. With the identity of the next leader of the free world hanging in the balance, Nader was plowing through a crushingly tedious 45-minute speech, a defiant refusal to acknowledge that anything important was happening in the world. Instead, Nader blathered on in his hoarse monotone about corporations, junk food, and childhood obesity. Then it was on to Internet privacy, the war on drugs, the "synergism" between social justice and political reform, and so on.

But even as Nader rambled on, willfully oblivious to the larger electoral drama, many of his followers stayed glued to the TV sets in the back of a sweaty and crowded National Press Club ballroom, where a crowd of perhaps 200 Green Party supporters had gathered. For the Naderites, if not for their leader, the contest was no longer something to sneer at. Throughout the night, Gore victories in states like Pennsylvania and California were greeted with cheers. And, as the tide turned, a distressed, almost spooked expression spread across the faces in the room. When CNN announced soon after midnight that Bush had won Arkansas, with Florida still too close to call, a round of gasps ensued. "Oh, no!" someone exclaimed. "Come on, Florida!" Gore's victory in Washington state was greeted with an audible "Phew!" Later, a middle-aged woman with a beehive hairdo strolled up to a television, surveyed the electoral map, and somberly declared, "I sure hope Gore gets it."

So perhaps the choice between "Gush and Bore" did matter after all. And yet there was a schizophrenia to these young Naderites, an incoherence that allowed their Gore cheerleading to coexist with lusty enthusiasm for Nader's

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anti-Democratic Party clichés. Even in Gore's dark hours of the late night, Nader's obnoxious attacks drew a loving response from the several dozen fresh-faced young diehards packed around his podium. "Have we sent a message to that corrupt Democratic Party?" Nader asked his entranced followers, who exploded in applause. "I'll tell you who's squirming now," Nader later gloated. "There are a lot of people in the Democratic Party who are squirming." More wild cheers.

On the campaign's final night, Nader supporters still hadn't figured out whether they wanted to save the Democratic Party or simply destroy it. And by then it was a little late. Yes, their candidate, as they loudly proclaimed throughout the night, had made history. But the most important history he made was the apparent election of George W. Bush. And it seemed to feel a little more complicated than they had thought it would.

One thing the Naderites remained stubbornly unconflicted about, however, was their candidate's infallibility. At Nader's election-night gathering, every suggestion that his 3 percent showing in the popular vote had been a failure was either shouted down or denied altogether. Early in the night, Nader aides handed out a press release accusing the Democrats of falsely downplaying their man's share of the vote—when, in fact, it was their own talk of scoring between 5 and 9 percent in early returns that turned out to be misleading. When Donna Brazile told CNN that Nader's campaign was "a lot of hype but not a lot of votes," a twentysomething Nader aide—whose thick black glasses and oversize jacket made him look like Elvis Costello circa 1978—shouted, "Bullshit!" When Larry King pressed Nader about his failure to reach 5 percent in the polls, a voice from the crowd denounced King's "stupid questions." And when Tom Brokaw suggested to Nader that he had been "nothing but a spoiler," a furious chorus of boos filled the room.

But what else had Nader been? He failed to reach his stated goal of 5 percent. And, by the light of Wednesday morning, it was clear that the 97,000 votes he collected in Florida—where he had made a last-minute campaign stop the day before the election—almost certainly included enough Gore defectors to prevent the vice president from winning the state and, thus, the White House. Nader himself, of course, was unfazed. Sometime after midnight he gloated to his followers, "Watching how close this election is . . . our efforts are quite clearly affecting the outcome." Indeed they were.

As Nader droned on past one o'clock in the morning, it became clear that, despite his insistence that the Green Party was poised to take over the world, his appeal can only shrink. At his final "Super Rally," at the MCI Center in Washington, D.C., on the Sunday before the election, Nader delivered a brutally didactic sermon that included references to a reading program developed by a Brazilian educator, the vision of an obscure Egyptian architect, and quotations from Martin Heidegger and Mahatma Gandhi. Nearly an hour into his address, some of Nader's followers—who, earlier, had sat spellbound for speeches by sermonizing celebrities like Michael Moore and Phil Donahue—were heading for the exits. On Tuesday night Nader was at it again, delivering three different speeches that wandered from drinking-water infrastructure to community health clinics to public transit systems—you name it. The messianic righteousness of Nader's lecture wasn't surprising, but its sheer length was. And, once again, it was too much, even for his loyal followers. "OK, Ralph, we've heard it before," one lanky young man in a suit grumbled to a friend as he checked a television for the latest on the election. Some people, at least, realized that something more important was going on. ■

Campaign Journal

End Run

By Michelle Cottle

ORLANDO, FLORIDA, NOVEMBER 5

There's something about the final days of a political campaign that's a little like the closing hours of a telethon. People tear around the stage, pleading with the folks at home to "pick up the phone," to "get involved," to understand that "one person can make a difference." Time is running out! We need your help to reach our goal! There are hyperbolic

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speeches, overwrought praise for "all the folks who have gotten us this far," a parade of cheesy celebrities and celebrity has-beens talking up the cause, and, of course, the stomach-churning tension of whether or not the campaign will reach its goal.

So it is that, with just two days until this ulcer-inducing election ends, I find myself here at Tinker Field, standing beside the pitcher's mound, watching Wayne Newton and Travis Tritt sing a duet of a Hank Williams tune as part of George W. Bush's eleventh-hour "Bringing America Together" tour. Earlier, I had been sure the evening's low point would be Bo Derek's brief, incomprehensible pitch for W., in which she rambled on about having once been humiliated when some European friends ridiculed her about, among other things, America's lack of universal health care (a major part of W.'s agenda, needless to say). At one point the befuddled Derek praised "Gore" instead of "Governor Bush" and had to quickly correct herself, explaining that she had a *really* bad cold. Even so, none of her missteps was as painful as this duet from hell. Tritt is fine, but the unctuous Newton is stinking the place up. As he sings—and I use that term loosely—he gazes at Tritt as if crooning a love song directly to the longhaired country star. Worse, he keeps throwing Tritt into a quasi-headlock/bear hug in an effort to show the crowd what big buds the two are. If this is the "united, not divided" America Bush envisions, I fear for the nation.

The unseemly antics on stage notwithstanding, the rally is an advance team's dream. The night is warm and the field is packed with somewhere between 6,000 and 15,000 high-spirited Bush supporters (depending on which newspaper estimate you believe). Several hundred have been here since 5:30 this afternoon, even though the governor isn't expected to arrive until 10:00. The enthusiasm borders on frenzy. Twice, a local party pooh-bah steps up to the microphone and calls for the paramedics to assist an overexcited supporter who has collapsed near the stage. This crowd comprises the hardest of hard-core party faithful—people dressed in elephant paraphernalia who would wait in a snowstorm for three days without food or shelter to hear someone, anyone, tell them that W. will rid the nation of Clintonitis. No one here is talking about policy. They're talking about Bush's honesty and integrity. And their evidence largely comes down to the fact that Bush isn't Bill Clinton, while Al Gore probably is. "You can trust what Bush says," fan after fan sighs. By contrast, "Gore is a liar! He's a thief! He's a crook!" Ben Norris of Apopka, Florida, barks at me as if I were hopelessly dense.

The last-minute hubbub over W.'s failure to disclose a 1976 drunk-driving arrest, meanwhile, strikes this group as decidedly uninteresting. "No big deal. Everybody's been arrested," says one grandmotherly-looking redhead, who evidently runs with a wilder crowd than I. "Why should it matter what Bush did twenty-four years ago?" chimes in supporter Glenda Morgan. Indeed, some Bush backers even see W.'s arrest as evidence of his unimpeachable character—one sign in the crowd proclaims, DUI: DEDICATED DAD, UNDERSTANDING INDIVIDUAL. IT DIDN'T WORK GORE!

Surrounded by Clinton haters—and holding a slight lead in the polls—it's no wonder Team Bush is swaggering into the homestretch. When the candidate himself at last ascends the stage (Bo, Wayne, and Travis all smiling supportively in the background), he looks calm and confident and shows little wear and tear from having spent the day jetting around the state. He thought he would be tired by this time, Bush confides to his screeching fans. (Indeed, just being on the trail this weekend must be something of a strain for the governor, who had been spending most campaign weekends at home in Texas.) But the size and enthusiasm of this crowd has him positively energized. After charming the audience by announcing that today is his twenty-third wedding anniversary—adoring glance at Laura—Bush launches into his standard 20-minute talk about what it means to be a leader and how sad and sorry the past eight years have been. "We haven't seen nothin' yet!" he jeers, in an awkward play on one of Gore's stock stump lines. The crowd goes wild. And, with a shower of God-blesses and a blizzard of confetti and fireworks, W. slaps a few backs, kisses a few cheeks, and is whisked into the waiting motorcade.

AUSTIN, TEXAS, NOVEMBER 7

Forty-eight hours later, with poll returns rolling in from the East Coast, the view from Bushland is very different. For starters, the normally fabulous weather here is truly miserable. A slow drizzle has been falling since midday, and the temperature has plummeted. Infinitely more important, the early election returns are not all that the ultraconfident Bushies hoped they would be. By 8:00 p.m. Texas time, the networks have called both Florida and Pennsylvania for Gore, radically dimming the governor's chances of putting together the 270 electoral votes needed to win. Each Gore victory, announced by CNN and projected onto the Jumbo-Tron screen towering above the party in front of the Texas capitol, is met with silence by the mass of supporters here. The only signs of frustration come when the networks declare Hillary Clinton the senator-elect in New York: People boo.

An hour later, though, the mood shifts as the red-faced networks toss Florida back into the too-close-to-call column. A roar goes up from the revelers, and the crowd cheers as conservatives take to the airwaves to smugly bitch about the earlier call. "That's really an interference in democracy," scolds virtue gasbag Bill Bennett. Soon, rumors start flying about other states that may still be in play—Nevada for Gore? Pennsylvania for Bush?

Adjacent to the street party, in the temporary trailer park set up to house the networks' operations, media folks huddle around their computers and TV screens, searching for some clue as to how this evening will end. People chew their nails and pace the room. One woman actually begins to weep from the stress. But, down in the party zone, the crowd rocks on. The beer and wine flow freely as Bush supporters, oblivious to the cold and the rain, dance to the live bands that troop across the stage. "We were here by 7:30 and we're gonna stay, stay, stay as long as it takes!" drawls Nadine Arnet, a white-haired Texas matriarch who bears a striking resemblance to former Texas Governor Ann Richards. So much so, in fact,

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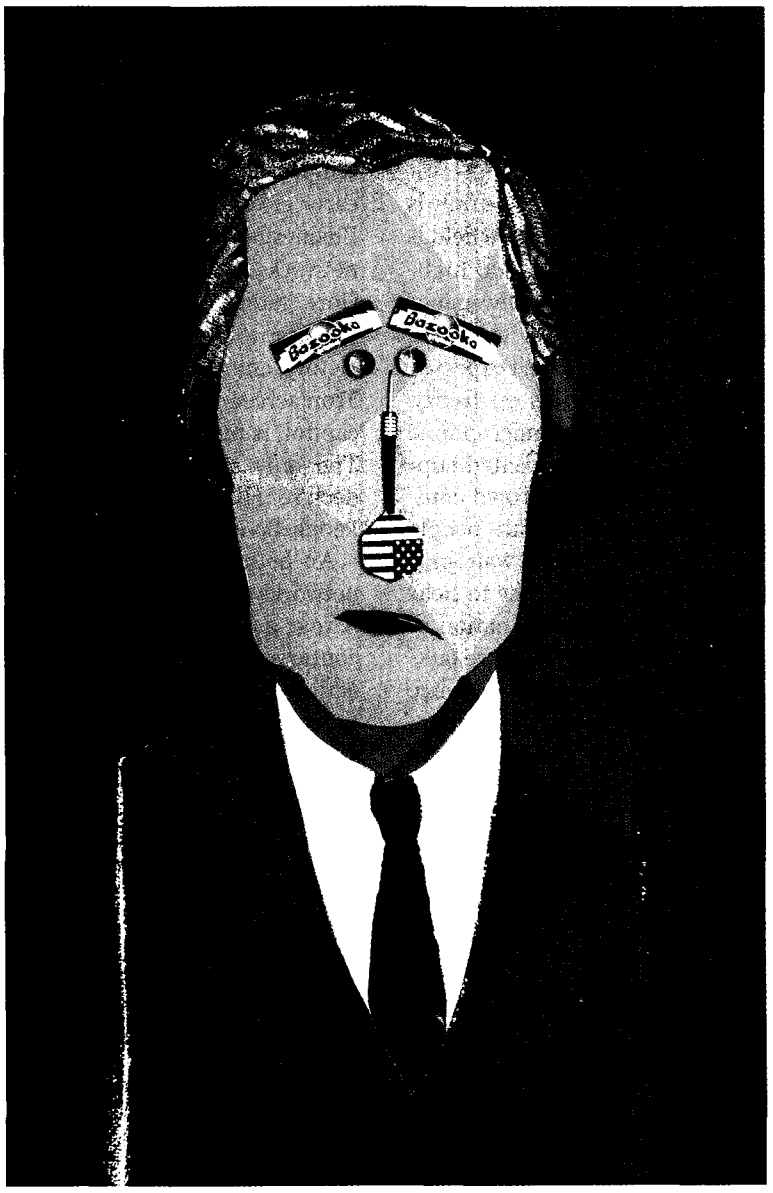
that Arnet has hung two signs around her neck—one in front, one in back—disclaiming, I'M *NOT* ANN RICHARDS. She also carries a larger sign taking aim at Richards's 1992 quip about Poppy Bush having been born with "a silver foot in his mouth." Artfully decorated with silver glitter footprints, the sign proclaims, BORN WITH A SILVER FOOT, BUSH KICKS GORE OUT!

At around 11:30 p.m., Wayne Newton and Bo Derek are back. Derek gives another highly articulate, deeply felt pitch for Bush, and then Newton asks the crowd to bow its head and ask God to make George W. president. (Quick, alert Joe Lieberman!) Then Newton tries to lead the group in "America the Beautiful," but in the middle of the first verse he is interrupted by a CNN update of the raw vote count in Iowa. Gore has a wafer-thin lead—prompting boos and hisses. Apparently, the beer and the rain have begun to chip away at the crowd's good manners. The instant the Iowa update is finished, Newton starts up again with the singing—joined by the apparently tone-deaf Derek. It's about this time that I become convinced the night will never end.

Around 11:40 p.m., the networks project that the Republicans will retain control of the House, and the crowd lets out a mild whoop. But still no word on the presidency. With all the polls closed and most of the results in, it's down to Florida. (As cold and miserable as I am, I thank God I'm not Jeb Bush.) Having been burned once by prematurely calling the state, the networks are now hypercautious. Every few minutes, they project and analyze the incoming raw vote count. For the first few hours, Bush is ahead, which prompts howls of delight from the capitol crowd. The party zone has grown progressively younger, as seniors and parents with small children succumb to the late hour and inclement conditions. (Like the weather, the portable toilets leave much to be desired.) A little after midnight, George P. Bush makes his first appearance of the evening, trying to keep the crowd fired up with chants of "We want Florida" and "We want W." The response is pretty weak—probably because the booze has run out.

At 12:30 a.m., things get tense again as the reports from Florida show Gore closing the gap. With 94 percent of the precincts reporting, Gore and Bush are now splitting the vote 49 percent to 49 percent. As if on cue, the skies open up and the heretofore annoying drizzle becomes a deluge. The remaining Bush backers hunker down under their umbrellas and prepare to tough it out. Fifteen minutes later, the CNN folks announce that the Florida count probably will not be complete until 2:00 or 3:00 a.m.—Texas time. That's it for me and most of the rest of the crowd, which begins a mass exodus from the party zone. It's time to go home and watch the rest of the returns in our pajamas. Governor Bush would surely understand.

But the morning just brings more pain. Although at approximately 1:15 a.m. (Texas time) the networks called Florida—and thereby the presidency—for Bush (at which point I went to bed), last-last-minute returns made the race tight enough to force a recount. Gore, having initially called Bush to concede, has retracted his concession, and a phalanx of Democratic lawyers is being dispatched to the Sunshine State for the recount.



After nearly two years, tens of thousands of miles, and millions of handshakes (not to mention dollars), all I can think is: How fitting. Whomever you supported, it's not surprising that one of the least emotionally satisfying presidential races in recent history should deliver such an unsatisfying election night. Sure, it may have been a kick for CNN and other news outlets, whose ratings soar when viewers stay tuned to such tremor-inducing sociopolitical dramas. But for the rest of us the election has started to resemble a houseguest who has stayed far too long and keeps finding ingenious ways to hang around even longer. Won't somebody, anybody, decide this election? Please. ■

HANOCH PIVEN

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Al Gore's campaign against himself.

The Hard Way

By David Grann

In the final, frantic days of the campaign, the vice president's aides used Air Force Two to insulate him from the hordes of reporters—"the deconstructionists," as he occasionally called them—who had picked apart his personality for the preceding twelve months. The plane's occupants were carefully divided by category. Up front, just behind the cockpit, were the Air Force officers hovering over listening devices in what they called the "communications center." Then came the staff, who cordoned off the vice president's private cabin from the rear, followed by Secret Service officers, who formed a double barricade. Finally, in the aft, in the most distant compartment, sat the dozen or so pool reporters allowed on board.

Earlier in the year, Gore had sometimes wandered to the back of the plane to chat. But, as November neared and gaffes dogged his campaign, he increasingly kept to himself—remaining in his cabin, a small, roughly ten-by-ten box with a television and a foldout bed.

One morning last month, I asked Gore's press secretary if I could get a tour of the plane. After a brief discussion, a steward led me up front, past the Secret Service, the staff, and the Air Force officers. When I passed the vice president's cabin, a Secret Service agent and an aide blocked my view. But, to my surprise, on the way back the view was clear—and I could see the vice president sitting only a few feet away in a black leather chair.

His head was facedown on the table in front of him, his arms folded over his eyes. He looked as if he were sleeping, and I stared at him, trying to imagine what he was thinking or if, after campaigning so relentlessly for so many hours, he could think anything at all. His hair, usually perfectly combed, was sticking up, and I could see the bald spot on the back of his head. The steward barked at me to hurry along, and the vice president must have heard him, because he lifted his head a few inches off the table. He stared at me for a second, then, looking exhausted, lowered his face again. As I headed toward the exit, a stream of aides pushed past me, yelling orders at one another. "He needs his makeup," one of them said, and I could see them filing into his little room, rousing him for another stop.

Gore's ascent to the presidency—an ascent that hung in the balance as Florida recounted its ballots and this article went to press—was not supposed to be this hard. Perhaps no one in American history had ever been so groomed for the White House. When Gore was six, his father, a longtime U.S. senator, promoted him in the press as a political protégé—"a budding politician," as a *Knoxville News-Sentinel* headline proclaimed. By high school he had already displayed signs of his birthright—a sharp if slightly ethereal mind, a blunt athleticism, and a ferocious competitiveness. He was, as the editors of his high school yearbook noted somewhat irritably, "the epitome of the All-American Young Man." Shortly after he graduated from Harvard, Gore's friends were already mapping out, as one of them told *Newsweek* reporter Bill Turque, "his ascendancy to the presidency."

Gore was careful not to disrupt his apparent destiny: He went to Vietnam (even though he opposed the war), closed the blinds when he smoked pot, ran for the House at age 28, and willed himself into the Senate. "You've got the magical name—Al Gore," the ordinarily bombastic talk-show host John McLaughlin once told him. "Your father was in Congress for thirty-two years. You've got character. You've got no clay feet, no skeletons showing. You're intelligent ... you're a devout Baptist. You're almost too good to be true."

And yet he wasn't. Not in campaigns, anyway. Gore was a poor campaigner. The very qualities that made him so effective in the back rooms and deliberative bodies that defined politics 40 years ago were liabilities under the camera's gaze. He came across in public not as wise or determined but as "pompous," "wooden," or "condescending," as the scribes eagerly put it. And the harder he tried—putting his hand over his heart, raising his voice—the more he struck people as a phony. Ironically, he had sensed this weakness as a young man at Harvard, where he wrote an honors thesis on the impact of television on the presidency—and rued the increasing focus it placed on "personality." "The cameras ... seemed to intimidate him from being himself," Gore wrote of Lyndon Johnson.

They had the same impact on Gore, or so he suggested after his failed run for the presidency in 1988. After that race, in which he altered his style and certain issue positions on the advice of pollsters, he vowed never again to doubt his own judgment—never to, as he phrased it, "put a finger to the political winds." As he wrote in his 1992 half-memoir, half-environmental manifesto *Earth in the Balance*, "I reluctantly concluded that I had to look inside myself and confront some difficult and painful questions about what I am really seeking in my own life, and why. I grew up in a determinedly political family, in which I learned at an early age to be very sensitive—too sensitive, perhaps—to what others were thinking, and to notice carefully—maybe too carefully—the similarities and differences between my way of thinking and that of society around me."

And yet twelve years later, when he ran for president for a second time, he seemed once again in danger of slipping into a consultant-woven cocoon. On the night before he

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announced his candidacy, in his hometown of Carthage, Tennessee, Gore met privately with a former actor named Michael Sheehan, who had prepared Clinton for the 1996 presidential debates. Sheehan videotaped Gore practicing his speech, then instructed him on how to sound more natural and upbeat. The next morning, Gore stood under a maple tree, punching his hands in the warm summer air the way he had seen his father and Clinton do so many times, racing over his syllables so they didn't sound too stilted. But in the middle of the speech he began to sweat profusely. And this campaign, too, gradually became engulfed by accusations that Al Gore was playing a role rather than being himself.

For much of the year 2000, the cycle repeated itself again and again. Gore would hit his stride, as he did when he pummeled Bill Bradley in the primary debates and when he addressed the Democratic convention, and then the media would revive the old clichés: He couldn't interact authentically with voters, he didn't know how to be himself. Perhaps in response, the Gore campaign repeatedly tried to place its man in less formal, more "natural" settings. As the campaign entered its homestretch, Gore staffers organized a series of "kitchen table" conversations. The idea was to have Gore meet with a handful of voters in small, intimate settings over breakfast—to connect in a way modern campaigning no longer allowed. To let voters get to know Gore one-on-one.

But it wasn't that simple. As his motorcade sped through the streets of Kansas City on its way to one such "conversation" one October morning, an army of Secret Service officers and reporters rolled out. Sirens wailed as cops roared by on motorcycles; police cars blocked the end of every intersection, and a few commuters looked on, dumbfounded. Secret Service agents had already encircled the small, silver diner by the time the motorcade arrived. "Let's go, press pool!" someone shouted. "Move out!"

Van doors popped open and more than a dozen cameramen flooded out, their boom mikes and lenses perched on their shoulders. The diner was no more than 20 feet by 20 feet, built like an old trolley car, and I could barely squeeze inside, past the jukebox, advance men, agents, and reporters. Gore's aides directed cameramen around the front of the counter, where, along with the waitresses, they faced the six or so customers, who sat on chrome stools, trying to pretend this was normal. The rest of the press stood behind them while the Secret Service took up posts at every corner. For a while we all stood there, looking at each other, unsure of what to do or say, and then, as restlessness began to spread, the door opened and in walked Gore. "So, what's on your mind?" he said.

It was clear the customers, mostly union workers, had been handpicked by the campaign. They said things like *I*

DAVID COWLES

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like your position on the environment or *What would George Bush do to our Social Security?* and Gore responded with statements like "I appreciate that" before launching into the same stump speech he had delivered the night before to thousands of people. Gore grasped the substance of policy as well as anyone to run for president in recent memory. But, at the lunch counter, his staff didn't want him to show off his knowledge; they wanted him to feel people's pain, to be an average Joe. And the facade of intimacy only made the interaction seem more stilted.

Later that day, they tried again. Gore entered a small room at an Iowa community college filled with students who had gathered for the filming of "The Queen Latifah Show." He wore rouge and sat in a lounge chair, struggling not to slouch. "I get this feeling the vice president right here likes to get a little loose," Queen Latifah said. Then, as if it were normal, the former rap star leaned forward and asked the man who hoped to become the forty-third president of the United States, "Have you ever worn leather pants?"

Gore smiled awkwardly as the room filled with chortles. "I . . . I don't think I have. I had a leather vest. I used to have a motorcycle."

"You still ride?" she asked.

Gore looked into the camera and said he and Tipper had once been on a double date with another couple, the two men dressed in tuxedos, the women's arms laced around them, when a blue light appeared from a police car and they fled into an alleyway.

Queen Latifah pushed further: "Let's play a little pop culture game. . . . On a woman, leather or lace?"

"Lace," he said, trying to sound neither too stiff nor too risqué. And it was painfully clear that Al Gore—a private, serious, ironic man—would at that moment have preferred to be almost anywhere else on the planet. The very events designed to show off his real identity seemed to be suffocating it.

FIVE DAYS BEFORE the election, I tried to puncture the veneer myself. The vice president had agreed to a brief interview as we drove to the airport after a rally at a junior college in Scranton, Pennsylvania. It was still early in the morning, and he sipped Diet Coke from a Styrofoam cup. He yawned and said the hardest thing about the campaign was not getting enough sleep: "Last night I got about five hours, which is OK, compared to the night before and the night before that, both of which were red-eyes." As the car pulled out, he looked out the window at the small crowd that had gathered along the road under a veil of clouds. He waved, and I noticed that he had, to my surprise, blue eyes; his hair had filaments of gray, and he wore the same kind of suit someone had told me his father used to wear, navy blue with a neatly pressed white oxford shirt. "Are we stopping for this crowd or not?" he asked. "We're not supposed to," the driver said.

Gore didn't answer right away; he seemed to calculate how many voters there were. "Then we won't," he finally said, and continued, as if to explain to me his thought process, "because we've got the big Chicago rally at noon and these people were probably inside [the previous event]—don't you guess?"

I nodded, though I wasn't sure. Since Gore is generally considered one of the most intellectually curious, academically minded men to seek the presidency in modern times, I asked him if he'd had any time to read while on the campaign trail. "I had considered reading a novel on this drive to the airport this morning," he said, "but instead I'm speaking to you." He said it so deadpan, without changing his intonation or cracking a smile, that it took me a moment to realize that he was joking. After a while, I asked him about his senior thesis and how, decades later, the media's coverage had affected his campaign. "I don't know that I have much expertise," he said. "I think it's rather obvious that the dominance of the electronic media, especially the introduction of 'Headline News' every fifteen minutes and the Internet, has resulted in the traditional print media being jostled out of their formal role in providing news." As a result, he said, they are more in the business of "selling attitude."

There was a long pause. "There's been a hostile takeover of journalism by deconstructionism," he started, then stopped. "You know," he started, stopped himself again, and then continued, "the press have a job to do, and try to do it very well."

His change of tone was so abrupt that I asked him why he didn't just say what he thought. Why, for instance, had he recently dodged a question about whether he favored the designated hitter in the World Series? What effect could his remarks have had? "I don't really care about the designated hitter," he said.

"You know what I mean," I interrupted gently.

"I do know what you mean, and I do think there is something to it, because when your words are being broadcast to the public [and] every word is going to be parsed, you do have an incentive to choose your words more carefully."

As we neared the airport, I asked him the question that seemed at the heart of why, despite a booming economy and an edge on the issues, the election was still in doubt: Is it necessary for a great president to be a great campaigner? He paused for a moment. "I think a president needs to be a great persuader, but I think . . . the test of persuasive power in campaigns is imperfectly but nevertheless matched to the kinds of persuasive skills a president needs."

Could he survive if he lost on Tuesday? He smiled. "Fortunately, that is a hypothetical question which will cause a chuckle among your readers as they read this during the transition."

The car came to a halt on the tarmac, and a trail of cameramen lined up around us. "And you know," he said, "when I say there's been a hostile takeover of journalists by deconstructionists, [what I mean] is the idea that inner motive can always be inferred from context is often simply wrong. And yet it's a philosophical narcotic that people find impossible to shake, and so much of what you see now is self-confident assertion based on no evidence, no facts, no real hard inquiry—just context, which process is self-flattering to the purveyor because it's always evidence of cleverness." He paused before opening the door. "What matters," he said, as he vanished into the pack, "is what's real, and that has a way of rising to the top." ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Changing Worlds

Film has a lot of functions in our lives, acknowledged or not, and one of them is as calendar. New films, as well as old ones revisited, mark the passage of time. Here, for a sobering instance, is a new French film in which Gérard Depardieu plays a deceived husband. Depardieu! Mr. Scrotum himself! Time really has passed if the hunk who has been surfing on testosterone ever since *Going Places* in 1974 now plays a husband whose wife is attracted to another man. *Incroyable.*

Not literally, however. In **The Bridge** (Phaedra), Depardieu is very *croyable.* His role is a construction worker, Georges, who gets a job that keeps him away from his wife and teenage son all week long. (The job is on the construction of a bridge, which gives the film its chance for a symbolic title.) One week, while he is gone, his wife accidentally meets a man at a film theater and slips into an affair that quickly becomes an intense love match. In a relatively short time, she leaves Georges, not because of dislike for him but because of fire for this other man. Depardieu's only performance trouble with this—for him—novel role is the kind of work that Georges does: Depardieu has become a bit blimpy, and in his person he doesn't suggest a construction worker. But he easily creates Georges's firm affection for his family, and he is pathetic yet dignified when he learns the facts. Affectingly, he conveys the man's slow encompassing of his hurt, too stunned to be angry and violent. Depardieu co-directed the film, with Frédéric Auburtin, and has done well by himself.

Though his performance of Georges is a sort of farewell to the glandular Depardieu past, in another sense he returns here to his past. From the very beginning of his career, he has been much more than the stallion that he often portrayed; he is clearly a genuine actor. In such roles as Danton in Wajda's picture of that name, the priest in Pialat's *Under the Sun of Satan* or, most particularly, the title role of Angelou's *Colonel Chabert*, he transfixed the viewer with his immersion in character depths. But too often, as in *Cyrano de Bergerac*, he has been willing to let his vitality do all his work for him. (I could watch only a portion of his recent appearance, on an American network, in a French TV film about Balzac. It was merely Depardieu, in another costume and wig, once more blustering along.) In *The Bridge*, small-dimensioned though the role is, he is again really acting. Thinking. Caring.

Carole Bouquet, too, as his wife, is a continuing surprise. Twenty years ago she was not much more than another sexy French leading lady, distinguished only by her irritating belief that her smile was winning. In recent years her work has become much more responsible, more thoroughly concerned with complex women, such as the Resistance leader in Berri's *Lucie Aubran.* The wife she plays here is disturbing: Bouquet creates a woman discovering that sudden tides of response can alter supposedly fixed lives. Charles Berling, as her lover, and Stanislas Crevillon, as her teenage son, provide the right context for Depardieu and Bouquet.

The screenplay, by François Dupeyron from a novel by Alain Leblanc, seems at first just one more French film about an extramarital affair. (There is a further plot complication, not essential to the story but wryly possible: the lover, too, is involved in the building of that bridge.) The performances are the first elements to interest us, but the screenplay itself adds its own facets. The son learns of his mother's affair very quickly, and she knows that he knows. She then deals openly with him about it, relying on the fifteen-year-old's comprehension, through his love for her, that this is not a fling but a profound change for her. And she relies on the boy's love of his father: to safeguard Georges, the boy won't tell him what is going on. When Georges does find out, he understands why the son kept his mother's secret.

Add, too, that Depardieu and Auburtin directed with respect for the film's people, rather than for titillation, and *The Bridge* becomes a poignant suite for woodwinds.

The English director Michael Apted has made a lot of varied films of varying interest, among them *Gorky Park*, *Gorillas in the Mist*, and the most recent James Bond, *The World Is Not Enough*, but he is most impressive with his documentaries—especially the six about a group of fourteen English people. Apted began shooting them in 1963, when they were seven, for *Seven Up*, and he has continued to film them every seven years—the latest was *42 Up*. Many of us who have seen these pictures are hoping for *49 Up*, etc., possibly.

Apted's latest documentary is in a very different vein. **Me & Isaac Newton** (First Look) had the same effect on me as Allan Miller's *High Fidelity* (1988). Miller's film, about the Guarnieri quartet, made me feel that I had wasted my life by not being a member of a string quartet. Apted's picture, about seven scientists, made me feel the same way about science. Of course *Me & Isaac Newton* doesn't detail the disappointments of many lives in science, any more than Miller detailed the broken hearts in the music world. But, like the Guarnieri people, these seven scientists did live, did work, and did contribute—most are still contributing—to society in such wonderful ways that, after the film, the viewer almost wants to slink out of the theater in shame because of his own life choices.

The seven people whom Apted interviewed, obviously with approaches that stimulated them, are an international group: Gertrude Elion, a pharmaceutical chemist, Ashok Gadgil, an environmental physicist, Michio Kaku, a theoretical physicist, Maja Mataric, a computer scientist, Steven Pinker, a cognitive scientist (probably the one best-known, through his books, to the general public), Karol Sikora, a professor of cancer medicine, and Patricia Wright, a primatologist and conservationist. (Elion, a Nobel laureate, died shortly after the film was shot; it is dedicated to her.) The interviews are interwoven, and Apted includes plenty of visual extension—for instance, Wright in the Madagascar jungle observing rare species of monkeys, Gadgil in impoverished villages of his native India, with the people whose lives he has spent his own life trying to improve.

Patience, empathy, and exceptional skill—these are the hallmarks of Apted's documentaries. He makes it easy for these people to explore their persons as well as their work. Elion remembers how difficult it was for a woman to enter her field when she began. Mataric, in another womanly counterpoint, is very pregnant when we first meet her and is later tending her infant daughter as she works. Sikora says that, when he was fifteen or so, he watched his father die of cancer and that this expe-

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rience determined the course of his life. Kaku (who, as a child, accompanied his Japanese-American parents to an internment camp during World War II) loves to ice-skate because it connects him with physics. We see him doing dazzling things on skates. He says, "Once I am on the ice rink, it's just me and Isaac Newton."

We can expect enlightenment and affirmation from a documentary about eminent scientists, and we certainly get them here. The unexpected bonus is charm. ■

Depressive Lucidity

By PAUL BERMAN

The Elementary Particles by Michel Houellebecq translated by Frank Wynne

(Knopf, 264 pp., $25)

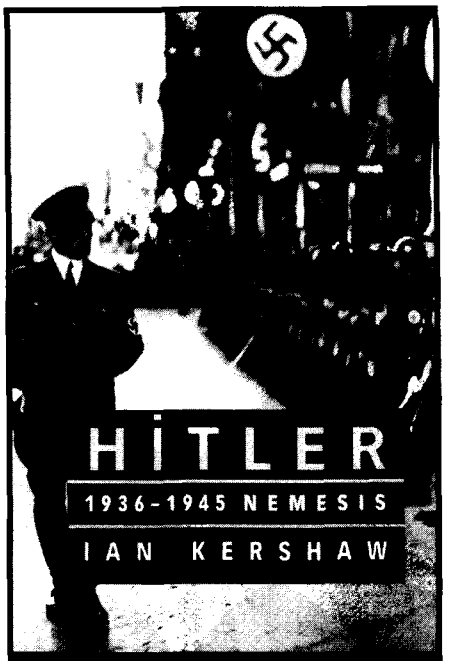
THE NARRATOR OF Michel Houellebecq's first novel, *Extension du Domaine de la Lutte*, or *Extension of the Field of Struggle*, visits a shrink, who diagnoses him with a grim-sounding condition called "depressive lucidity." In Houellebecq's second novel, *The Elementary Particles*—the book that has aroused all kinds of controversies in France in the last couple of years, and has sold hundreds of thousands of copies, and is bound to arouse its share of American controversies, too—a main character likewise visits a shrink. The same diagnosis is proposed: "depressive lucidity." There is a pattern here. Now that I have read three volumes of Houellebecq's poetry, too, plus a collection of essays and prose poems, and have listened to his CD and his rock band, I feel confident in diagnosing "depressive lucidity" as the dominant condition afflicting whole aspects of this man's very strange writings and commentaries.

Depression does not make for an attractive or even a natural theme for a novel. The narrator of *Extension du Domaine de la Lutte* is a hopelessly isolated sad-sack computer technician in Paris who has no girlfriends, no friends except for an unhappy priest, no congenial workmates, no enthusiasm for his job, and no ability to savor anything that comes his way. The computer company sends him on a business trip to Rouen, where he sits in a cafe. A scary German dog ruins the atmosphere. A wedding procession passes through the street. The bride and groom turn out to be old and homely. The narrator orders a pizza. It tastes bad. He attends a porno movie. The hall is full of disgusting, masturbating exhibitionists. He falls ill. No one gives a damn about getting him to the hospital.

Life is narrow, dark, and acrid. And in *The Elementary Particles* things only get worse, unto the creepiest of sci-fi calamities. The novel's two protagonists, Michel and Bruno, half-brothers, grow from childhood into middle age with opposite personalities, neither of which proves to be even remotely adapted to the rigors of life. Michel, a timid scientific nerd, finds no pleasure in sex, is barely capable of love, and customarily lives in isolation. Bruno, an abrasive literary screwball, is a man who, when his mental state sags, masturbates in public, and, when his mental state recovers a bit, finds a fleeting pleasure by hanging out in sex clubs, in spite of how bad he feels about the modest size of his penis.

People commit suicide right and left, especially women. The gates of the mental institution are always yawning open. Only the weakest of threads ties one person to the next. You have to feel sorry for everyone involved, except for the people who are too detestable for pity. And you do have to wonder how even the most talented of writers could possibly work up ingredients as thin as these into a novel of any tastiness or texture. Novelists have lavished riches of literary skill on the topic of extreme economic impoverishment, but what can be done with extreme impoverishment in the realm of

PAUL BERMAN is the author of *A Tale of Two Utopias: The Political Journey of the Generation of 1968*.



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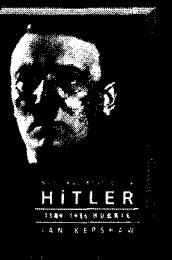

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emotion? Every man is a millionaire in his emotions, Isaac Bashevis Singer said. But not in the novels of Michel Houellebecq. He himself acknowledges the difficulty in *Extension du domaine de la lutte*: "This progressive effacement of human relations is not without posing certain problems for the novel."

BUT THEN, IN Houellebecq's case, there is also the other half of his diagnosed depression, the "lucidity." The lucidity in question turns out to be mostly abstract—the sort of crisp clarity in reasoning that is taught in philosophy classes. He theorizes on scientific and metaphysical themes—on the rarity and the unavoidability of mutation in chemicals and in organic life. He theorizes on history. He adopts, in *The Elementary Particles*, a doctrine out of Auguste Comte, and in good Comtean fashion sketches the stages of development which mankind has had to traverse, from primitive times through Christianity to the present epoch, with intimations of the catastrophic future.

He theorizes on the rise of individualism and on its sorry meaning for sex, love, and truth. You might wonder if an analytic lucidity on airy topics such as those can possibly suit a novel any better than does his bleak landscape of depressed isolated consciousness. For what is the purpose in writing novels? Isn't it to discover a middle terrain between the low-grounds of lonely, individual awareness and the heights of pure abstraction? Shouldn't a novel go tramping instead through the leafy trails of social existence, where people are husbands and wives and brothers and friends and enemies? Where life is verdant with facts and relations? But then, as I will not be the first to observe, the novel can do many things, and in the area of lucid theorizing Houellebecq can call on some noble precedents.

His character Bruno in *The Elementary Particles* composes a couple of outrageous racist essays about the inferiority of black men, "animals with big cocks and small reptilian brains," and sends the essays to a famous novelist in Paris—who, in a bit of mischief, Houellebecq has named "Philippe Sollers," though the real Sollers cannot be held accountable for anything that Houellebecq has done to him. The famous novelist responds warmly by saying to Bruno, "You're a real reactionary, that's good. All the great writers were reactionaries: Balzac, Baudelaire, Flaubert, Dostoevsky." That is a nice set of names, and listing them shows some gumption on Houellebecq's part, as a budding literary reactionary himself. Céline, too, would appear to be one of his ancestors, due to his bitterness and self-loathing (and his loathing for entire races of other people).

BUT IN THE matter of analytic lucidity, the name that leaps up from the reactionary list is surely Balzac's. I say Balzac partly because, in Houellebecq's volume of essays and prose poems, *Rester Vivant*, or *Staying Alive*, he offers a compact and mildly rueful defense of *The Human Comedy*—of the fantastic energy in Balzac's characters, and the realism within Balzac's lack of realism. "After all," says Houellebecq, "in life there remain real elements of melodrama. Above all, in the life of other people, elsewhere." But mostly Balzac seems to me apposite because—as Houellebecq himself has pointed out in the oddly titled magazine *Les Inrockuptibles*, a hip publication—Balzac made a habit of theorizing lucidly on any number of themes, and doing it in a cool, detached style, like a scientist.

Balzac's theorizing led him to divide the whole of *The Human Comedy* into dry-sounding units called "Studies"—such as "Philosophical Studies"—quite as if he had written a series of research papers instead of novels. And what did Balzac say in those scientifically lucid reveries? In one of his "Philosophical Studies," a tale called "The Search for the Absolute" (which Houellebecq doesn't mention in anything of his that I have read, but which seems to me loosely connected to *The Elementary Particles*), Balzac manages to speculate on a range of matters—from the diminishing variety of European culture and its reflection in architecture (a Houellebecqian theme), to the superior desirability of women with physical deformities, and onward to the deepest chemical elements of all existence and the possibility of finding our way, by means of scientific experiment, to the inmost secrets of life and the universe.

And none of that takes away from Balzac's art. On the contrary, you follow his philosophizing, and you feel that you are in contact with the manias of the writer himself, and not just those of his characters. You feel the intensity that drove him forward. In Balzac's case, that intensity was a doctrine about amorous passion. He wanted to postulate a world of untrammeled passion, especially the passion of husbands and wives for each other in good Catholic union, though he was willing to consider other combinations, too. He wanted to show that untrammeled passion is always being obstructed by some odious or irritating force.

And so he looked around, and set out to catalogue all the cheapening and obstructive aspects of the life of his time—to show us how awful are the greedy peasants, and how grotesque are the appalling Jews who have come to participate in French society, and how horrible are the workings of crass social climbing in an ambition-addled place like bourgeois Paris, not to mention in the provinces, and how dreadful are the uppity women who have lost their traditional sense of a woman's properly subservient role. He wanted to say, fie upon those many horrid modern things, fie upon the French life of his own times, fie upon modernity!

He wanted to show that, in some other era, emotions were purer and the flames of passion leaped higher. It was in earlier times, in the years before the French Revolution—in the age before that most terrible of crimes took place, the beheading of the king. For if there was any one act that tamped down the natural ardor between men and women, Balzac wanted to insist, it was the tragic decapitation of Louis XVI. Regicide undid the proper hierarchy of French society, and therefore of family life. Regicide ruined a civilization in which men were men and women were women—a civilization in which women trembled in adoration and even in fear of their haughty husbands, and men responded with manly confidence and zeal, and passion burned white. Balzac was a reactionary, in sum, because he was a Romantic.

HOUELLEBECQ'S LUCIDITY AND scientific tone owe quite a bit to that sort of fantasizing, in an up-to-date version. Houellebecq knows that his characters are pathetic losers. He despises them. Bruno in *The Elementary Particles* becomes a high school teacher and exposes himself to one of his students, an act than which nothing could be more contemptible. But Houellebecq has a theory of how his characters have ended up in such a sorry pass. It is owing to the dreadful evolution of modern life. Things used to be better, years ago—in the age of aristocracy and romantic love.

In the aristocratic age, he says, "a man would feel a certain affection for his spouse—though not before she'd borne his children, made a home for them, cooked, cleaned and proved herself in the bedroom." Men were faithful. They looked to their children to carry on the family name and honor. The age of romantic love was especially wonderful. Houellebecq is a brave writer, normally speaking, and shows a studied indifference to how anyone will receive him. *The New York Times Magazine* sent a reporter his way, and he does seem to have enjoyed making an ass of himself. But for some reason, in his novels he affirms his points about aristocracy

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and romantic love in a timid spirit, as if even he, the earnest reactionary, cannot help fretting about looking silly.

On the delicate topic of aristocracy, Houellebecq's narrator affirms that, despite the terrible things that you may have heard about inequality and oppression under feudal regimes, the humble social classes in those days were by no means denied access to the aristocracy's noble doctrine of family life: "Merchants, craftsmen and peasants also bought into the idea." The narrator concedes that, in regard to romantic love, the relation between the sexes has not always achieved an ideal balance. Arranged marriages do not attract his admiration. And when did the custom of arranging marriages come to an end? It was in the 1950s. Only, a pity, the end of arranged marriages was followed all too quickly by the onslaught of sexual liberation. And so, as a result, "it would be fair to say that the late 1950s and early 1960s were the 'golden age of romantic love'—a time we remember today through the songs of Jean Ferrat and early Françoise Hardy."

In contrast to Balzac, who postulated as his Good Old Days the many centuries of Ancien Régime before the tragic beheading of 1793, Houellebecq's Good Old Days of aristocracy and romantic love appear to have lasted about five years, from circa 1958, which happens to be the year of his own birth, to 1963 or thereabouts. He does not mean to be funny about this. But it strikes me that hardly anyone today seems capable of laying out a properly reactionary yearning for times past without hitting a slightly ridiculous note. How else to explain the comic tone, wholly unintended, that you find in a certain kind of conservative magazine today, in America as much as in France—the Allan Bloom problem, you might call it, where the author means to be a terrible scourge, only to end up thumping an indignant pinky on the table?

Houellebecq's absurdity will have to be excused, then. He does mean to be serious. And with his several ideas about aristocracy and romantic love in place, he tears into his attack. He says that modern science may have solved the problems of material well-being, but material success has only unleashed a new problem. It has unleashed the modern individual, who is driven by the fear of death and by a sense of self to assert a final impulse: "the need to feel superior to the others." The need comes out as personal competition for money and especially for sex—even though you might have supposed that, under conditions of material plenty, economic and sexual competition would, both of them, have been rendered pointless. But not at all. The knives are out.

Houellebecq, in short, is an anti-liberal. He makes the kind of argument that any number of philosophers and social critics have been making in France for fifty years now. He thinks the bonds of community have snapped. He thinks the sense of morality and good judgment has evaporated, and that people have been left in a wretched isolation, blind to the sources of their unhappiness. And what are those sources? Here Houellebecq sets himself apart. The French Marxists of long ago used to blame capitalism, and the post-structuralists used to blame the anonymous eternal structures of anthropology, and more recently a certain kind of pessimistic French liberal has chosen to blame the whole thrust of world history. *Somebody* has to be at fault. Houellebecq blames the radicals of the '60s.

He tells us that Michel and Bruno, the nerd and the sex maniac in *The Elementary Particles*, are the sons of Janine, an enthusiastic sex cultist of the 1950s and 1960s. Janine lived the ideas that came filtering into Europe from the wilder reaches of California and Esalen and the communalism of Aldous Huxley. She was friskily promiscuous in the name of spiritual depth, and took no concern for her little boys, who were brought up by their grandmothers. And this merry irresponsibility of hers, apart from being dreadful for her own children, played its part in the growth of a horrendous murder cult, in the style of Charles Manson, something truly demonic. So the brothers are victims. They grow up as wounded souls. They are the products of hippie madness. And they are furious at their mother. She lies on her deathbed, and Bruno not very prettily calls her an old whore.

On the other hand, when Houellebecq briefly awards to Bruno, the great masturbator, some small experience of love and happiness, the angel in Bruno's life turns out to be a tender hearted, middle-aged, hippie earth-mother, who responds to his troubles by saying things like, "I know what we should do. . . . We should go and have an orgy on the nudist beach at the Cap d'Agde. You get a lot of Dutch nurses and German businessmen there. . . . You need a holiday too, and you need to get off with a lot of different women." So Bruno ends up with a girl just like dear old Mom, whose spirit of sexual adventure is revealed to have its nurturing side, after all.

This is the little twist that makes Houellebecq a novelist and not a pamphleteer. But then, he does have his ideas, and the hippie earth-mother suffers a medical catastrophe in the course of getting gang-banged, and suicide is, as always, the result. So the accusatory finger remains in place, not just in *The Elementary Particles* but in nearly everything I have read by Houellebecq. He wants to show that people like dear old Mom paved the way for the hippie masses of the 1960s and 1970s. And the hippies, together with the political radicals, wreaked the horrors of modern individualism upon mankind. They did it by breaking up the old system of moral restraints and the heritage of aristocracy and romantic love, in the name of their hopeless ideal of egalitarian love and plenty for all.

Taken as a work of social criticism, then, *The Elementary Particles*, together with Houellebecq's other writings, offers a variation on what in America, at least, has become a well-known accusation. It is the conservative accusation against the '60s generation, the complaint that, in the name of high-minded ideals, the radicals of some thirty years ago ripped out the guts of simple morality, and the normal functionings of society have been a shambles ever since. This aspect of *The Elementary Particles* (together with the sex-club scenes, of course) accounts for most of the sensation that Houellebecq has made in France. Only, in Houellebecq's variation, the accusation goes even further than what the American conservatives have proposed. This is because, in France, the '60s generation is blamed for undermining sexual morality, general morality, social hierarchy, home, church, and school. And it is blamed for advocating leftist economic ideas.

But most of all it is blamed for the non-leftist market ideas of the 1980s. That decade may have been the right-wing Age of Reagan in the United States, but it was also the left-wing Age of Mitterrand in France, under a socialist government full of veterans of the student barricades of twenty years before; and in both countries, market values and consumer merchandising began to triumph over older, venerated ideas about social life. In the United States, the '60s generation is blamed for being anti-American, but in France the same generation is blamed for being "insufficiently" anti-American—sometimes even for demonstrating an unseemly appreciation for the American popular arts and for America's spirit of innovation. In France, nobody has idolized California's Silicon Valley more than the aging heroes of 1968.

And so, when Houellebecq rails against the '60s generation in France, he is making a larger, more general complaint than America's tub-thumping neoconservatives like to make about the left-wing radicals in the United States. He is com-

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plaining about the whole trend of modern life, not just a single tendency. He is complaining about the triumph of the market. And he is complaining about America and its influence.

He resents the evil tone of America's feminists and of feminism generally. He resents the shadow cast by America's demonic hippies on their French counterparts. He attributes the sexual revolution in France to America's popular arts, not just from the evil '60s and '70s. In the course of his two novels he draws a distinction between the malign influence of Marilyn Monroe and that of Brigitte Bardot, who, for reasons that I cannot quite follow, strikes Houellebecq as rather more sympathetic. Janine, the evil mother, goes so far as to rename herself Jane, just to emphasize the American connection.

He complains about the rise of uniformity, which strikes him as an American trait (just as it struck Balzac as a French trait). He blames the Americans for his own obsession with the size of his penis, since the habit of measuring penises derives, in his imagining, from the manias of American pornography, which derive from what he takes to be the American mania for measuring and classifying all things. (America, land of Descartes.) He blames America for his own bad experiences on the internet. You have to laugh at Houellebecq's account, in *Rester Vivant*, of how unhappy he has been, looking for sex partners on the Internet:

> Finally, ANNIE doesn't respond any more; has she attained the enchanted summits of mutual desire? So much the better for her, so much the better for her. I settle for SANDRA W. and we begin to chat gently. Everything goes well. Everything goes very well. Packets of numeralized information circulate through the optic fibers with the speed of light. . . . All is well. I think of Albert Gore, Vice President of the United States and the initiator of an ambitious project of a multimedia network permitting the transference of 'voice, text, data, images,' throughout the American continent. When his project is working, will I be able to hear my interlocutor? Will I be able to masturbate for her in front of a video camera?

But then, having wrapped an American flag around the cheapness of his experience, he goes on, undismayed, to borrow a few bracing and strident tones from the American accusation against the '60s, and to send them ringing through his own accusation. He likes to say that the radicalism of those satanic times dealt blows to the "Judeo-Christian" culture, which has about it the sound of an American politician. ("Judeo-Christian" wasn't Charles Maurras's idea of traditional culture, or Céline's.) In *The Elementary Particles*, Houellebecq invents a California Republican named Macmillan who has written a wild tract against hippies called, in French, *Génération Meurtre*, or *Murder Generation*, arguing that Charles Manson was the truest hippie of all, and serial murderers are the hippie legacy—all of which might bring to mind a real-life right-wing California tract of a few years ago called *Destructive Generation*, which made similarly bizarre and extravagant claims (mixed with a few good points) about the political radicals of the time. It's worth bearing in mind that Houellebecq's first book, published in 1991, was a study of the American horror writer H. P. Lovecraft. So Houellebecq, the anti-American, does have his American dimension.

And then, on top of his sillier, wild-eyed views, the novel piles on a few opinions that are positively repulsive, not just in connection to the black race and the black penis. Houellebecq seems to recoil viscerally from signs of aging in women. Nothing strikes him as more horrible than a hippie chick beginning to sag around the edges. In *The Elementary Particles*, all of these views point, at last, to a sci-fi nightmare of the future. You slowly realize that the story of Michel and Bruno has been written as some sort of formal history in the futuristic aftermath of a biological cataclysm. I will not describe the cataclysm, except to note the parallel between Michel's genetic studies in *The Elementary Particles*, in collaboration with a scientist unpronounceably named Hubczejak, and the chemical studies of Balzac's hero, Balthazar, in "The Search for the Absolute," in collaboration with a scientist named Wierzchnownia. Except that, in Balzac, the efforts of Balthazar-Wierzchnownia to get at the heart of all existence come to naught, whereas in Houellebecq the efforts of Michel-Hubczejak lead to . . . but you will have to discover that for yourself.

Balzac, being a genius, knew how to keep his theorizing and his cast of characters in proper balance, and how to keep everything aloft on ebullient clouds of enthusiasm. Houellebecq, the depressive, cannot do that. *The Elementary Particles* is an ambitious novel, filled with wild ideas on the biggest of theological and historical themes. And it is built around a complicated frame, with two protagonists and a mysterious sci-fi narrator looking back on current times from a standpoint in the future, and a few hints of Catholic mysticism thrown in, for additional confusion. But the big ideas and the complicated structure are a lot to hang on Houellebecq's thin and saturnine characters. So the novel does end up as something of a pamphlet, too ponderous in its ideas and theories to succeed fully as a novel, too cranky to take seriously as a pamphlet. The translation by Frank Wynne is fluent and natural-sounding, though I notice that Wynne has now and then clouded the clarity of the cranky ideas. *Extension du domaine de la lutte*, which appeared in 1994, is a much less ambitious book—a thin novel, that only hints at larger thoughts. But the smaller ambitions are more neatly packaged.

There is something original about Houellebecq, though, even at his worst. It is obvious enough in the novels, and in the poetry and everything else he does, too. You might suppose that, with his sexual desperation, his rage at market societies, his hatred for his parents, and his several other bleak and bitter themes, Houellebecq's poetry would race down the page in a jagged, broken-metered rant, like the young Allen Ginsberg heading for a touchdown. But not at all. Houellebecq expresses himself in formal, even antique verse forms, with a slightly hortatory tone, rather like Victor Hugo. He is not exactly a master of technique. His ear trips him up every two or three lines. Still, you can't help marveling at how Houellebecq sticks to what are supposed to be smooth and creamy verse structures, even while heaping curses on his dying father or raging about the inequalities of love—as in his book *La Poursuite du Bonheur*, or *The Pursuit of Happiness*:

> Dans un ciné porno, des retraités
> poussifs
> Contemplaient, sans y croire,
> Les ébats mal filmés de deux couples
> lascifs;
> Il n'y avait pas d'histoire.
>
> Et voilà, me disais-je, le visage de
> l'amour,
> L'authentique visage.
> Certains séduisants; ils séduisent
> toujours,
> Et les autres surnagent.
>
> In a porno theater, the wheezy retirees
> Were watching, without believing,
> The badly filmed frolics of lascivious
> couples.
> There was no story.
>
> And there, I thought, is the face of love,
> The authentic face.
> Some people seductive; they always
> seduce,
> And the others float along.

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Where you do see his best is in the prose-poems and essays. The essays are short, about the length of a one-page piece in a magazine. Some of them were written, in fact, for *Les Inrockuptibles* and other magazines. They are composed in a sullen tone, which he controls more carefully and consistently than in the novels and more gracefully than in his verse. The essays express a full-scale attitude, if not quite the whole of a personality.

He is angry. He is disenchanted. He belongs to a party, though it is not exactly a political party, not even the party of the dream-filled extreme right. He disavows any ideological affiliation of that sort, for all the satisfaction he takes in his own prejudices. "Partisanship makes for happiness, and you shouldn't be happy," he says. He belongs, instead, to the gloomy, acrid party—the party of sulphur. "You are on the side of misfortune; you are the somber party." And he expresses his sulphurous attitude forcefully, even movingly.

> If the world is composed of suffering it is because the world is essentially free. Suffering is the necessary consequence of the free play of the parts of the system. You should know that, and say so.
>
> It will not be possible for you to transform suffering into the goal. Suffering *is*, and cannot by consequence become a goal.
>
> In the wounds that it inflicts on us, life alternates between the brutal and the insidious. Know those two forms. Practice them. Acquire a complete familiarity with them. Distinguish what separates them, and what brings them together. Many contradictions will then be resolved. Your voice will gain strength and amplitude.
>
> Due to the characteristics of the modern epoch, love can hardly be seen anymore; but the ideal of love has not gotten smaller. Being fundamentally situated out of time, like all ideals, it cannot shrink or disappear.
>
> Thus a particularly flagrant ideal-real discordance, source of particularly rich sufferings.

Houellebecq has not wandered into unknown territory in saying these things. But there is something new in his tone. It derives from an amazing absence in his attitude. He is not ironic. He does not hold up sixteen mirrors to admire his own attitudes from ten thousand angles. He does not laugh at himself, or snicker, or even curl his lip, except sometimes. He despises irony. He despises the notion of relative truths. "Poetry is a way of establishing definitive moral truths. You should hate liberty with all your strength. Truth is scandalous, but without it, nothing has any worth." And so he wants you to discover what is true. "Your deepest mission is to dig toward the Truth. You are the gravedigger, and the corpse." He says, "An honest and naïve vision of the world is already a masterpiece."

Houellebecq seems to me honest. He is definitely naïve. Even so, he hasn't written any masterpieces. I sincerely hope that not many people will turn to him for political and sociological insights (though they will, they will). But that tone of his, his oddly lucid whine and shriek, do get under your skin. He is not pallid, he is not a shade of himself. The man is a bit demented, but he is, recognizably, a man, and of the present moment, too. ■

Hitler's Willing Believers

By Omer Bartov

The Third Reich: A New History by Michael Burleigh

(Hill and Wang, 938 pp., $40)

I.

Inundated as we are with studies of Nazism and the Holocaust, one tends to forget that very few reliable histories of the period, of the entire period in all its aspects, actually exist. While the complexity of the Third Reich seems to impede its easy compression into a single monograph, the moral dilemmas it raises imply that its historical reconstruction often reveals as much about the historian telling the tale as about the epoch itself. To be sure, chronological and geographical distance facilitate greater objectivity. Thus the historian Ian Kershaw, born in 1943, recently noted in an interview with the German weekly *Der Spiegel* that in writing the biography of Adolf Hitler he benefited from the "luxury of late birth," as well as from being an Englishman whose family could count "neither victims nor perpetrators during the Second World War." This enabled him to "evaluate Hitler and the Third Reich with greater impartiality" than older scholars and members of nationalities more directly touched by the events.

And yet the Third Reich is one of those historical convulsions, not unlike the French or Russian revolutions, that is certain to generate fascination, horror, and controversy well beyond its time and its place. Because Nazi Germany was the site of such exhilaration and destruction, such fantasy and suffering, any attempt to understand it must combine an impartial evaluation of the available historical facts with a measure of empathy for its protagonists, so that we might catch glimpses of their hopes and their anxieties, their goals and their motivations. Such a fusion of scholarly detachment and empathetic imagination, of course, brings into play the historian's own biases and affinities.

A brief look at some of the better known general studies of the Third Reich demonstrates the extent to which they were influenced by the spirit of their time, even as they advertised their dedication to rational evaluation and objective reporting of the facts. Consider *German History of the Recent Past, 1933-1945*, the 1953 study by the director of the Munich Institute for Contemporary History at the time, Hermann Mau, and his collaborator and successor, Helmut Krausnick. According to its dust jacket, this book "prove[s] that nowadays it is the historian, and only the historian, who can reconstruct a historical picture of National Socialism which, in its strict truthfulness creates the basis for a sincere overcoming of this period." In fact, the book's confrontation with the criminality of Hitler's regime is restricted to a mere twelve pages under the subheading "Persecution," of which just three pages discuss the so-called "Final Solution of the Jewish Question." Moreover, the eighteen pages devoted to the "Resistance" create the impression that neither the public nor the German military knew much about, let alone supported, the Nazi

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policies against the handicapped, the Jews, the Gypsies, and the occupied Slav populations. Later in his career Krausnick went on to produce some essential scholarship on the murder squads of the Third Reich, but in the 1950s the discussion of the recent past still required a generous padding of heroic resistance and innocent ignorance.

Five years later, the prolific historian Golo Mann (who was Thomas Mann's son) published *German History, 1919-1945*. Here too, the publisher's blurb described Mann as grappling with "that calamitous epoch of our history, whose abysmal problematic is nowadays often repressed through reference to the 'unmasterable past.'" But "such clichés," averred the blurb, "do not exist for the historian. His concern is both passionate sympathy and cool objectivity in similar measure." Mann's "cool objectivity" is reflected in his introductory comment that in studying the Nazi regime, "an urgent task of German historiography and instruction remains as always to identify not only its dark side but also the entire complexity of its origins, essence, and consequences, and to transmit these findings truthfully." "To be sure," Mann hastens to add in a statement of "passionate sympathy," such objective reporting "is only one [task], and we cannot leave it at that. In a world which is still broken up into nations, the German nation too, and especially German youth, will not survive in the long run without a healthy measure of love for the homeland and national consciousness. To give it back this measure, after it had almost entirely been taken away from it through a chain of catastrophes and disgraceful revelations—that too is the task of history writing." Mann rejects the argument "that both tasks contradict each other, that one provides criticism and revelations, while the other makes for the kind of pride that may once more become blind and unjust." Indeed, Mann obviously believed that his own book provided precisely the right balance between scholarly objectivity and patriotic instruction.

It was owing, perhaps, to the perceived "need for a healthy measure of love for the homeland" that in a volume of 195 pages Mann devoted only a single page to the genocide of the Jews, and even then insisted that the killing in the ghettos, concentration camps, and extermination camps "was known at the time only by a very small number of murder administrators." Mann is aware that the German army was given (and itself issued) orders to murder the Reich's political and "biological" enemies, but he remarks that "one believes" the generals' claims (since then conclusively refuted) to have rejected the "murder decrees" while insisting on "soldierly cleanliness." After all, Mann writes, "they were not barbarians," and "the German army overall did not conduct itself more brutally than any other army." To prove the untainted honor of the military, Mann follows the few lines on the extermination of entire populations in Eastern Europe and Russia with six whole pages on the German resistance to Hitler.

In 1969, Karl Dietrich Bracher's *The German Dictatorship* offered a much deeper analysis of the origins of the Nazi movement, including substantial chapters on the evolution of racial thinking, imperialist ideology, and anti-Semitism. Bracher fully recognized the criminal nature of the regime, and the complicity of numerous agencies—including the military—in its crimes, and the ideological motive behind the regime's actions. While stressing the deep cultural and political roots of Nazism, Bracher rejected deterministic interpretations that made Hitler appear to be the inevitable culmination of German history. ("In the final analysis," he wrote, "Hitler came to power as a result of a series of avoidable errors.") But even Bracher devotes no more than ten pages of his very long book to a subchapter titled "The Murder of the Jews," which was typically followed by a section on the resistance three times as long. Bracher was representative of a generation of German scholars more interested in explicating the origins of genocide than in reconstructing its implementation, let alone the manner in which it was experienced by its victims.

Bracher's work was a major step forward from apologetic arguments by such historians as Gerhard Ritter, who spoke of Hitlerism as a foreign import. Other scholars were meanwhile absorbed in reconstructing the internal structure of the Third Reich, an approach best represented perhaps by Martin Broszat's *The Hitler State*, which also appeared in 1969. Broszat was then director of the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich. One of the main promoters of a "functionalist" interpretation of the Nazi state, and by extension of the Holocaust, Broszat presented Hitler's dictatorship as based on a "polycratic" system, whose main dynamic was derived from the competition between rival agencies over the Führer's favor. This process in turn led to what Hans Mommsen, another "functionalist" historian, called "cumulative radicalization," that is, increasingly murderous policies originating in structural factors rather than ideological ones.

Broszat's interpretation of Nazism came to dominate German historiography for some two decades. It was the exact inverse of Bracher's in that it relegated ideological factors and the analysis of culture and politics to a marginal position, while focusing on the interplay between institutions. Consequently, the historical scene became almost entirely depersonalized, and individual motivation appeared irrelevant in the face of anonymous, uncontrollable structural processes. To cite Broszat's rather tortuous articulation of his theory, "the 'polycracy' of individual office holders, each seeking to recommend himself to Hitler through a particular ability to get things done, ultimately led to a proliferation of arbitrary decisions and acts of violence." Since "below Hitler there was no overall political responsibility," a "constitutional development" took place that "atomized offices and responsibilities and reduced state administration to the agent of despotism." This "made it possible to translate into institutional terms, through special organs of the SS and police, those secret, frequently unwritten directives or expressions of Hitler's will, for example for the liquidation of Jews," whose "full extent and meaning were no longer recognizable, even to the individual branches of the state administration involved in carrying them out."

In sum: no one but Hitler carried ultimate responsibility or could fully grasp the extent of Nazi crimes; and genocide was propelled by unrelated structural mechanisms rather than being the expression of an ideological urge; and no one was in a position to stop or to limit the dimensions of mass murder. This kind of "structuralism" also made it superfluous to spend much time on the study of the actual perpetration of genocide. Hence Broszat devoted merely three out of three hundred and sixty-one pages (in the English translation) to a combined overview of the murder of the handicapped and the "Final Solution."

In the intervening years, scholarship on many aspects of the Third Reich, not least on the Holocaust, has greatly expanded. Yet no new *Gesamtdarstellung*, or comprehensive history of the period, has appeared in Germany, with the partial exception of Detlev Peukert's *Inside Nazi Germany* (1982) and Norbert Frei's *National Socialist Rule in Germany* (1987). Peukert's book is an important foray into "everyday life"—the conformity, and the opposition, in the Third Reich; but it is practically useless as far as the regime's criminality is concerned, not least because Peukert sees no need to "provide a further account" of "the fate of the Jews, who constituted the largest group among the victims of National Socialist racialist policies," since this "has been documented in extensive detail" elsewhere.

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And Frei's otherwise useful combination of historical reconstruction and original documents similarly devotes minimal space to the Holocaust and other criminal Nazi policies.

And so Michael Burleigh's massive and comprehensive new history is very welcome indeed. It is unrivaled in its range, its originality, and its ambition. I expect that this extraordinary book will remain unmatched for many years to come.

II.

THE THIRD REICH is a big book in many ways. Following a substantial chapter on the crisis of the Weimar Republic that led to Hitler's rise to power, Burleigh systematically examines all the important aspects of Nazi Germany, using a wide variety of archival sources, published documents, and secondary literature. By and large, the book tilts toward a more traditional interpretation in political and ideological terms; and it is critical of the kind of social history that has characterized German historiography in the last couple of decades. But this study defies simple categorization, owing to its scope.

Burleigh may be said to have overcome some of the major obstacles to writing a history of Nazi Germany already identified by Bracher thirty years ago. And while Bracher sought to reconcile the view of Nazism as an accident or a foreign import with the view of Hitler as the inevitable culmination of German history, Burleigh substantially enriches and deepens this approach. Rejecting historical determinism, he nevertheless demonstrates the extent to which Hitler came to reflect the frustrations, the aspirations, and the impulses of growing numbers of Germans. Similarly, although he outlines the intellectual, religious, and political sources for opposition to Hitler's regime, he simultaneously traces the deep roots of support for Hitler along with the more opportunistic collaboration with specific policies such as "euthanasia," territorial expansion, or anti-Semitism. And even as he dismisses the idea of collective guilt, Burleigh paints a depressing picture of a society that acquiesced in the establishment of a brutal dictatorship and facilitated the unfolding of its increasingly murderous policies.

Yet Burleigh's fundamental argument departs from Bracher's, and harks back to even older interpretations of modern dictatorship. His book combines the analysis of Nazism as part of a phenomenon of totalitarianism similarly found in the Soviet Union with the idea that Nazism's greatest force was owed to its promotion of itself as a political religion. (For this latter notion Burleigh relies most heavily on Eric Voegelin.) Both ideas have been recently revived in such collaborative studies as *The Black Book of Communism*, edited by Stéphane Courtois, and Hans Maier's edited series of volumes, *Totalitarianism and Political Religion*.

From this perspective, Burleigh's book is part of a laudable effort to contextualize the Third Reich as part of a pan-European phenomenon—but this kind of contextualization also creates a certain imbalance between the careful analysis of specific aspects of Nazi Germany and the sweeping generalizations about other regimes. Especially in the case of Stalinist Russia, Burleigh tends to rely more on older scholarship more closely associated with the politicized arguments of the Cold War than on the heavily documented studies by younger scholars of the Soviet Union who have worked extensively in recently opened former Soviet archives. He makes some persuasive arguments for reviving the totalitarian paradigm, but his evidence is rather anecdotal, and his thesis in need of a more rigorous analytical framework of comparison.

Nor is his thesis about Nazism as political religion consistently followed through. In truth, such a general and vague concept can hardly serve on its own as an interpretive tool for a nation of 80 million people; and Burleigh's own empirical background compels him to recognize the complexities and the contradictions within German society under Nazism. The notion of "political religion" as the controlling Nazi motivation just does not explain enough (or rather, it explains too much). Burleigh accepts Saul Friedländer's idea that "redemptive anti-Semitism" is the core concept for the understanding of Hitler's regime, but he does not quite clarify who the disciples of this main tenet of Nazism's political religion were and to what extent they, or their doctrine, played a decisive role in the history of the Third Reich. Thus Burleigh argues that many of the millions of Wehrmacht troops hardly adhered to this doctrine, yet he rightly notes that they participated massively in the crimes of the regime in the East.

Having already written extensively on the German academic promoters of eastern expansion, on the racial concepts and policies of the Nazi regime, and on the origin and the implementation of the mass murder of the handicapped, Burleigh is especially well equipped to write on the criminal aspects of Hitler's rule. More than any other available study, *The Third Reich* both chronicles the murderous policies of the Third Reich and presents them as its central feature. Burleigh has no patience with arguments about Nazism's modernizing impact, nor does he view it as merely or primarily the product of

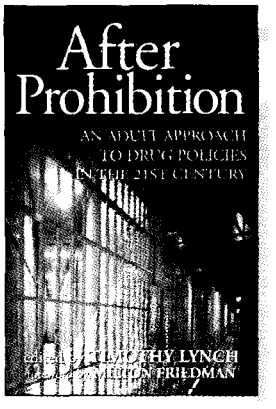
What Happens after Prohibition?

"You cannot read this book without recognizing the social tragedy that has resulted from the attempt to prohibit people from ingesting an arbitrary list of substances designated 'illegal drugs.' . . . Not since the collapse of the attempt to prohibit the ingestion of alcohol has our liberty been in such danger as it now is from the misnamed 'war on drugs.'"

—MILTON FRIEDMAN

"I think the facts boil down to drugs being a bad choice. Drugs are a handicap. But should someone go to jail for just doing drugs? I believe the time has come for that to end."

—GARY JOHNSON
Governor, New Mexico



After Prohibition: An Adult Approach to Drugs in the 21st Century edited by Timothy Lynch. Foreword by Milton Friedman. Available in fine bookstores or at www.cato.org. 185 pp./$18.95 cloth/$9.95 paper.

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modernity. His descriptions of the sheer barbarity of the regime from its early days to its apocalyptic destruction are among the most vivid and powerful anywhere in the literature on this abominable phenomenon. Even as he strives to keep his distance, one senses Burleigh's moral outrage in the face of the cruelty that he reconstructs, making such earlier works as Broszat's structural analysis seem pale and heartless.

III.

SINCE *THE THIRD REICH* is both a general history and a thesis-driven study, one must examine some of its underlying assumptions more closely. Burleigh defines totalitarianism as "accelerated creeping authoritarianism to the point where it became categorically distinct from what had gone before, in terms of its illegality, violence and limitless ambition." This definition is somewhat vague, and it does not allow for more precise distinctions between a variety of tyrannical regimes in the twentieth century.

Burleigh rightly argues that "the exceptional nature of Nazi governmental chaos can be pushed too far," and that "the mutually radicalizing effects of competing agencies may be both insufficient and less remarkable, as an explanation of the single-mindedness with which the Nazis went about realizing their ideological goals." Hence he asserts that "one aspect of dictatorship seems in need of more emphasis than it nowadays tends to receive—the suppression of the rule of law by arbitrary police terror," as "*the* most important departure from civilized values engineered by the Nazi government." All this is obviously true. And yet, as Burleigh is well aware, such studies as Robert Gellately's *The Gestapo and German Society* (1990) have demonstrated the extent to which German citizens collaborated with the Gestapo out of their own volition in order to make material or status gains at the cost of their neighbors and colleagues.

The Gestapo, it has been shown, was much smaller than, for instance, the German Democratic Republic's Stasi, and relied heavily on freely offered denunciations for its actions against "asocials" and the "racially undesirable." This is not to deny that, especially at the beginning and the end of the regime, violence within Germany itself was rampant. But for much of the regime's twelve-year existence, as long as one was not a Jew, or a Gypsy, or a Communist, or a handicapped person, or a member of the resistance (and the vast majority of the population belonged to none of these categories), one was quite safe. Indeed, between the mid-1930s and the early 1940s the majority of Germans were, by most accounts, increasingly happy, to an extent that was hardly conceivable by Soviet citizens in the equivalent period.

Alongside the obvious similarities between the Soviet and the Nazi systems, there were also important differences. Burleigh is right to say, for instance, that "a class bias reflected in harsh sentences for the enemies of the toilers, including many toilers themselves, was paralleled by Nazi discrimination on the grounds of race." But this should not obscure the fact that while Stalinist Russia was a brutal and murderous dictatorship, its main ideological and political goal was not genocide, whereas Nazi Germany was increasingly propelled by an urge to wipe out whole "races."

THE POINT IS not, as Burleigh writes, that "comparison between two evil systems only seems to surprise those who evidently have difficulty in including kulaks or Kazakhs in the human race, or who insist, too much for many tastes, that human suffering is ethnically divisible." The point is, rather, that while comparison is essential for historical understanding, it should serve to identify similarities *and* differences. Dead Jews are no better or worse than dead Kazakhs; but it is important to establish whether the Soviet Union was based on an assumption that all Kazakhs must be "removed," just as the Third Reich had vowed to "remove" all Jews. Failing to make this distinction between a regime whose ideology was genocidal, and a regime whose ideological promise of a better life to "the masses" ended in mass violence, misses the singular aspects of each system. It also fails to clarify why so many apparently rational and intelligent people were attracted to communism and why its failure has been felt as a terrible betrayal, whereas the destruction of Nazism was accompanied by a sense of triumph for humanity despite the horrendous scars that it left on Western civilization.

Such distinctions can be made also between the mentality of SS and SD (secret party police) officers in Hitler's Germany and of their equivalents in the NKVD, Stalin's secret police. For Burleigh, "it was precisely this combination of moralizing about trivia, absolute self-righteousness, and the utopian doctrine of the perfectibility of mankind through a radical 'quick fix,' which made the twin totalitarianisms of this century and the moralizing zealots who sought to realize them so lethal." Surely this is only part of the picture. The SS saw themselves as a new racial elite, but their model of organization, conduct, bearing, honor, courage, even dress, was the Prusso-German officer corps and the social circles from which it was recruited, a mixed bag of feudal nobility and well-to-do bourgeois keen to join the traditional elites. That is why Heinrich Himmler strove (not entirely unsuccessfully) to recruit carriers of old Prussian names to the ranks of the SS. The Nazi revolution, to paraphrase Walter Benjamin, was propelled into the future by the energy that it derived from fixing its gaze on a mythical past of ancient Germanic heroes, Teutonic knights, and Frederician glories. Hitler's most popular portrait featured him in full medieval armor; Himmler was obsessed with the Emperor Henry II.

The Bolsheviks, by contrast, despised the past and wanted to erase everything associated with it, be it the old military elite (which, unlike the German army, fought against them during the civil war), the bourgeoisie (which in Germany provided disproportionate electoral support to Hitler and thrived in the first half of his rule), or the codes of conduct, respect, and privilege of the *ancien régime* (which in the Third Reich were partly kept, partly modified, and partly radicalized to an extreme degree). Stalin's attempt in summer 1941 to recall the myth of old Russia and to invoke such Slav heroes as Alexander Nevsky was merely a temporary ruse to unify Russians at a time of national emergency; when victory, or at least survival, was assured, all such references were erased.

The figure of the SS officer who puts on his white gloves when inviting ladies to a dance and when sending people to the gas chamber is dramatically different from that of the red commissar sending people to their death in the name of social revolution. Himmler, as Burleigh notes, attempted "to couple hardness and decency" by insisting that "killings should be followed by abstemious 'comradely get-togethers' over dinner to discuss the 'sublimities of German intellectual and emotional life.'" Such "get-togethers" often ended up as drunken orgies, emulating a time-honored and very bourgeois tradition of German student fraternities. This notion of decency was foreign to the Bolsheviks, who might discuss the dialectics of history after their own brutalities. For Himmler, as he said to a meeting of SS leaders in Posen on October 4, 1943, "the extermination of the Jewish people" was "one of those things which are easy to talk about" but difficult to accomplish without being sullied by the experience. "To have stuck it out and—apart from a few exceptions due to human weakness—to have remained decent, that is what has made us tough." This notion of decency (which was, of course, a perversion of liberal bourgeois values) is what distinguished

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the Nazis from the Communists—and what made Nazism all the more frightening, because it represented not necessarily a break with Western civilization, but its continuation on an extreme path.

The tension between describing Nazism as a totalitarian phenomenon and viewing it as a political religion may be illustrated by Burleigh's own observation that "unlike the Communists, whose conceit entertained no room for defeat, Nazism was always shadowed by dire imaginings and apocalyptic scenarios. Unlike the Communists, the Nazis were prepared to take the whole of mankind down with them." Indeed, as he concludes, the Nazi apocalyptic political religion "was posited upon a final confrontation or reckoning with the Jews." Communism, in other words, offered an optimistic worldview whose goal was construction (albeit on the debris of the old world); but Nazism offered the glories of apocalyptic endings, and was therefore increasingly obsessed with destruction, even with its own destruction. As Burleigh rightly says: "Nazism did not become hubristic at this or that moment in time; hubris characterized the entire enterprise from its inception. What else was a 'thousand year Reich'?"

IV.

UNLIKE NEARLY ALL previous general histories of the Third Reich, Burleigh's volume devotes a great deal of space to the Nazi policies of racial persecution and genocide. His analysis of German anti-Semitism is all the more interesting because it is linked to his general argument that the working class supported the Nazi Party to a greater degree than previously conceded by left-wing historians. Burleigh thus asserts that "ostentatious sympathy for Jewish people was most evident in 'bourgeois circles,' with prominent families overtly socializing with Jews," whereas anti-Semitism "made inroads among the broad mass of politically indifferent workers." Hence too, while he argues that the *Kristallnacht* pogrom of November 9, 1938 featured much greater citizen participation than some historians have allowed, Burleigh finds that the few instances of support for the Jews were confined to "the so-called better circles," as one SD report put it.

Burleigh is clearly right to stress the breadth of support for the Nazis in German society, but he prefers to ascribe the brutalities either to lower-class mobs or to abnormal sadists and criminal types. His skepticism toward the working class is accompanied by a measure of preference for the more educated higher classes and the old nobility. Even the fact that an extraordinary number of SS officers went to the killing fields equipped with doctorates in law and philosophy is dismissed by him with the comment that they did not come from "social backgrounds traditionally associated with higher education." Conversely, Burleigh argues that "fanatical Nazis were uncommon" among "Gestapo regional chiefs," and that some "had left-wing backgrounds ... or were Roman Catholics, with records of hostility towards National Socialism."

Such observations are especially problematic in view of Burleigh's own assertions about totalitarianism and political religion. Consequently, the rich and contradictory picture that he sketches of German anti-Semitism, Nazi Jewish policies in the 1930s, and public attitudes toward the Holocaust ultimately provides no satisfactory explanation. Indeed, Burleigh ends up implying that a criminal leadership, together with a brutal group of administrators and perpetrators and a rough and nasty rabble, combined to make genocide possible in the name of an ideology (or political religion) apparently not adopted even by all of the worst perpetrators.

To be sure, Nazi racial theory was as ridiculous as it was murderous. German wits joked that the perfect Aryan "must be blond like Hitler, thin like Goering, handsome like Goebbels, virile like Roehm—and be called Rosenberg." And yet, as Burleigh's chilling description of the "euthanasia" campaign that preceded the genocide of the Jews by two years clearly shows, there could be little doubt that the Nazi leadership was intent on mass murder. For this reason it is surprising to encounter a certain ambivalence in Burleigh's evaluation of the Catholic and Protestant churches' positions regarding the Nazis. Indeed, while he expresses understanding for those ecclesiastical leaders who sought "some sort of dialogue" with the regime so as to "probe whether there was a gap between rhetoric and practice," Burleigh asserts that "this promised more dividends than outraged confrontation, however compelling this stance might be to Professor Hindsight."

That is an odd judgment. In view of the ultimate outcome, one wonders what dividends were gained by the combination of collaboration (such as handing out parish baptismal records to the Gestapo, abandoning Christians of Jewish ancestry, or proclaiming the Aryan origins of Jesus) and silence (as in Pope Pius XII's refusal to condemn the genocide of the Jews). That the churches protected their own interests is obvious; but it is not at all obvious that this helped any of Hitler's victims, or, for that matter, those brave Christian individuals who did protest what was hap-

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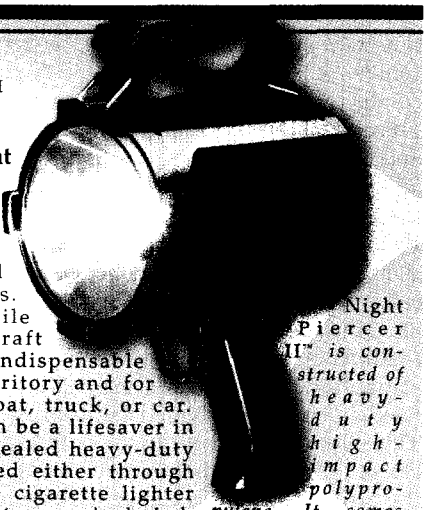

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pening around them. Nor, one might add, did this policy contribute much to the postwar moral stature of the established churches.

SIMILARLY, BURLEIGH EVALUATES the extent of collaboration and accommodation in the Nazi-occupied countries much less harshly than does much of the recent scholarship on the topic. His account of occupied and Vichy France portrays it as far less keen on accommodation with the Nazis than one finds, say, in Pierre Burrin's massive study *France Under the Germans*. Curiously, Burleigh himself concedes that "France alone was responsible for at least 42 percent of the total foreign contribution to the German wartime economy"; and he might also have noted that France was remembered by German soldiers as a most pleasant place to spend the war. And while it is true that widespread Polish anti-Semitism should not lead one "to treat Poles as co-perpetrators of the Holocaust," scores of survivor memoirs and a growing body of research show that even those Jews who escaped from the Germans rarely had anyone to turn to in the Polish (or Ukrainian) countryside, and were often killed or handed over to the Nazis.

Burleigh's powerful account of the criminal war unleashed by Hitler against the Soviet Union also raises a few questions when he attempts to explain the reasons for the Wehrmacht soldiers' brutal conduct. He rightly notes that, given their prewar conditioning in Nazi Germany and their ideological instruction in the army, "it would be surprising if many of them did not ardently believe in *Volk*, Reich and Führer, in Germany's superior right of conquest and dominance, or in the cultural and racial inferiority of other peoples." But Burleigh also remarks that "such sentiments were common to many people at the time," and that "Germans did not have a monopoly on hatred of the enemy." This may well be true, of course. But the fact of the matter is that Germany's war in the Soviet Union was the greatest campaign of murder and destruction ever recorded in history.

Moreover, Burleigh ends up expressing doubts about his own assertions of ideological commitment, arguing that the soldiers were more concerned with "news from their parents, wives, girlfriends, siblings, and children," although there is no reason to think that worry about family in the rear made the troops at the front any less determined to destroy the enemy. In fact, we have a vast array of documents testifying to massive crimes committed by the Wehrmacht, both as an institution and on the initiative of individual soldiers and units; there is also a great deal of documentary, personal, and photographic evidence of the willing, often quite cheerful participation in these crimes by men of all ranks and arms. Comparing this record with the conduct of the Red Army strikes me as somewhat unfair, considering that Soviet troops first witnessed the devastation of their land and people before they descended on Germany, and even then they can hardly be said to have paid the Germans in kind, despite their vicious conduct.

INDEED, IN CONTRAST to his compassionate analysis of Germany and other occupied countries, Burleigh appears reluctant to pay tribute to the terrible sacrifices of the Russian people (and other ethnic groups in the former Soviet Union). In this he is in good company with many Western military historians, who find it difficult to concede that without the Red Army the war against Nazism would not have been won, since no nation was willing to pay a similar price in blood and toil. Consider that the Soviet Union lost an estimated 27,000,000 people, whereas total American losses, including the Pacific, were 300,000, and both Britain and France lost 600,000 people each. (In the French case, the number includes 75,000 Jews murdered with French complicity and 40,000 French volunteers killed fighting for the Wehrmacht.)

Indeed, of over 3,000,000 German military deaths, only 150,000 Germans died in the West, along with about 500,000 civilian deaths from bombing and ground fighting. Terrible as Communist rule over Russia and Eastern Europe after 1945 was, we can say without a shadow of a doubt that Nazi domination was (and would have remained) far more murderous. Burleigh's entirely justified condemnation of Stalinist brutalities must not allow us to forget that without the sacrifice of millions of Russians perpetual Nazi rule would have sealed the fate of our civilization for decades to come.

Recent studies by such young scholars as Martin Dean, Christoph Dieckmann, Dieter Pohl, and Thomas Sandkühler have demonstrated the massive collaboration of local populations in the murder of the Jews in the Ukraine, Belorussia, and the Baltic states. Here too, however, Burleigh's judgment is surprisingly moderate, perhaps because he is worried about condemning whole ethnic groups. Indeed, in this case he seems to underemphasize the role that ancient prejudice and hatred came to play in circumstances of war and lawlessness. Significantly, Burleigh himself notes that out of 140,000 murdered Lithuanian Jews (95 percent of Lithuania's total Jewish population), between one-half and two-thirds fell victim to indigenous Lithuanian forces. Conversely, he uses German army terminology to describe Soviet partisans as "frequently barbaric, devious and indistinguishable from the civilian population," and implies that this at least partially explains the conduct of German troops toward civilians, even as he rightly notes that anti-partisan warfare in Russia often served as a cover for the genocide of the Jews.

V.

THE GERMAN SCHOLAR Götz Aly has proposed that the "Final Solution" was merely part of a general policy of ethnic cleansing in Eastern Europe. In reconstructing the main events of the Holocaust, Burleigh starts by rejecting this theory, asking how the shipment of a few Jews from Corfu to Auschwitz could have been related to the demographic reorganization of Poland. Similarly, Burleigh insists that the Holocaust "was not simply . . . a big dip in the graph of generalized twentieth-century barbarity," but rather both "the central element of a broader biologistic framework and *sui generis*, in terms of how the Nazis perceived Jews as an existential threat, and the implacable ferocity of the campaign's implementation."

And yet some of Burleigh's substantial discussion points in a somewhat different direction. Thus it is difficult to reconcile his assertions that "the Holocaust was not simply 'ethnic cleansing' *avant la lettre* or writ large" with his statement that "to Hitler, resolution of the 'Jewish Question' was one element within the larger project of resolving ethnic anomalies across the board, notably, the consolidation of ethnic Germans"; nor does his view that such actions were *sui generis* sit comfortably with his implied claim that the Soviet Union was engaged in precisely the same policies, since "for Stalin, these transfers [of ethnic groups] rid him of a foreign urban bourgeoisie and enterprising peasantry at a stroke." Burleigh appears to be trying both to preserve a sense of the singularity of the Holocaust and to link it directly to the crimes of Bolshevism. It cannot be done, not at least without relinquishing a measure of interpretive clarity.

Singularity and chronology seem to clash in Burleigh's account. Burleigh believes that in November 1939 German "minds . . . still balked at mass extermination as something only Bolsheviks did," implying that the very notion of genocide was inherited by the Nazis from the Communists, and could therefore hardly be described as *sui generis*. Similarly, the Nazi policy of "destruction through labor" (*Vernichtung durch Arbeit*) seems to

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Burleigh to be on a par with "Stalin's construction projects"—which, chronologically, would also make the Bolsheviks into the originators of Nazi murder techniques. Obviously I do not mean to defend Stalinist Russia from the charge of murdering millions of its own people (unlike the Nazis, who overwhelmingly murdered citizens of other nations); but the assertion that such killing followed the same ideological rationale needs to be substantiated.

Burleigh is particularly convincing in showing that murderous acts against the Jews were not limited to Germans (even as this goes against his earlier treatment of Ukrainians and Lithuanians). In a powerful section he describes the horrendous butcheries committed against the Jews by Romanian army units and murder squads, who massacred some 150,000 Jews in Bessarabia and north Bukovina with little help from the SS and SD units in the region, massacred another 60,000 Jews in the city of Odessa, and went on to slaughter a further 90,000 Jews in Transnistria, more than double the number killed there by the Germans. What this tells us about the murderous dynamic unleashed by Nazism throughout Eastern Europe is obvious.

The important point, however, is that once the Romanian regime decided to put a halt to the killings, and to protect the 300,000 Jews living in the Regat (or old kingdom), it accomplished this despite the protestations of the Nazis. But such reversals of policy were out of the question in the Third Reich itself, almost to the very end. In this respect, Nazi Germany was different not only from Romania, Hungary, or Bulgaria, but also from the Soviet Union, which put a stop to Stalin's bloodbath through its own internal mechanisms rather than due to outside interference, however unpleasant life in post-Stalinist Russia remained.

As in many previous general histories of the period, *The Third Reich* contrasts its discussion of the Holocaust with a discussion of the German resistance. Perhaps no other aspect of the subject better reveals the complex political attitudes of the protagonists, and thereby also of the historian telling their tale. After all, not only did resistance spring from radically opposed ideological and social groups, it also had to contend with assertions of treason against the government at a time of war and crisis. In the process, both the Communist resistance and the conservative-military resistance were compromised: the former because many members joined the Nazis while the leadership supported the infamous Ribbentrop-Molotov pact and the later imposition of dictatorial regimes by Stalin; and the latter because they initially supported Hitler, and their belated decision to act against him was motivated at least in part by the desire to stave off or improve the terms of an impending military catastrophe. Their own plans for a post-Nazi Germany were also undemocratic and expansionist.

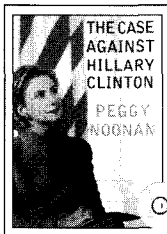
Curiously, Burleigh's chapter on the resistance is titled "When God Wills It, Even a Broom Can Shoot." Why he would use this Yiddish phrase is not entirely clear. One can only assume that he wanted a certain irony, since the main protagonists here are German aristocrats who never had much love or understanding for the culture that produced such sayings. Anyway, Burleigh's own sympathies are definitely with the gentlemen of the upper classes and the officer corps, whose derision for the Nazi upstarts was matched by their dislike of Jews, Slavs, Gypsies, and the German working-class "rabble." Many of them were indeed splendid fellows, courageous, articulate, often also deeply religious. But others were wholly taken over by Nazism. As the East Prussian Friedrich Reck-Malleczewen acutely observed in 1939 upon meeting a group of SS noblemen at a nightclub in Berlin:

> They were the bearers of old blood-bespattered names. . . . At first sight they looked like a group of dragon slayers or like archangels who have checked in their wings in the cloakroom. . . . Until a second harder look. . . . The first thing is the frightening emptiness of their faces. Then one observes, in the eyes, a kind of flicker from time to time, a sudden lightening-up. This has nothing to do with youth. It is the typical look of this generation, the immediate reflection of a basic and completely hysterical savagery. . . . Woe to Europe if this hysteria that confronts us now gets free rein. These young men would turn the paintings of Leonardo into an ash-heap . . . send cathedrals tumbling in the air, using the hellish arts of IG Farben . . . or they will perpetrate still worse things and worst, most dreadful of all, they will be totally incapable of even sensing the deep degradation of their existence.

To be sure, the Nazis preferred to loot great works of art rather than destroy them; for such men as Goering, Leonardo's paintings were infinitely more valuable than millions of Jewish, Gypsy, or Slav lives. Indeed, the Nazi urge to destroy was not significantly directed at the institutions and the treasures of Western civilization—another distinction, perhaps, between Nazism and Stalinism. It was Stalin who pulled down churches, while Hitler had himself appointed Chancellor at the Potsdam Garrison Church next to that symbol of Prussian military tradition, President and Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg. Himmler burned Jews alive in their synagogues, but Goebbels bemoaned the "barbarism" of the Allies who were carpet-bombing Germany's greatest cultural sites.

As Burleigh eloquently notes, the conservative resistance, along with some socialists and clerics, "saw Nazism as symptomatic of a broader cultural and spiritual crisis, namely the alienation and atomization attendant upon the 'massification' of modern society, with totalitarianism giving meaning to and ordering anomically drifting rootless people." The fear of the modern mob was expressed in many, often ideologically opposed circles. The socialist Theodor Haubach spoke of those who, "having escaped the control and discipline of religion, and alone and alienated from their gods . . . degenerate into grotesques, monstrosities and ghosts." The conservative Carl Goerdeler was obviously terrified of this "welling up of brutish men, of the rag tag and bobtail of the inexperienced and ignorant."

This anxiety about the "political consequences of mass irreligion" was, of course, itself indicative of a political stance. Nazism was not just the result of irreligion, and religion had spilled seas of blood in the past. Helmuth James von Moltke, one of the most impressive figures of the resistance, asserted that "an unbelieving mass will sell itself to any politician, but a class of believers will not." One wonders how he viewed the Thirty Years' War, which devastated Germany three hundred



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years earlier in the name of religion. Even more problematical, if we accept that Nazism had all the makings of a political religion, we must conclude that the issue was not one of "an unbelieving mass," but of a mass that believed in the wrong religion, following its self-declared messiah blindly into the abyss.

On a less metaphysical level, one must note that while the resisters demonstrated great heroism in the face of evil, they were also, in Burleigh's words, "men of their class and time." Thus they not only believed "that there was a 'Jewish Question' requiring resolution," but also in some cases they actively participated in genocide. Perhaps, as Burleigh argues, it is "invidious to censure retrospectively" such men "for not espousing views congruent with post-war democracy"; but one cannot ignore the anti-Semitism and anti-democratic sentiments of many resisters when taking the measure of their moral stature and motivation.

The political system that the German resistance envisioned for Germany excluded such basic components of democracy as political parties, ministerial responsibility, and universal suffrage, and insisted on keeping many of the territories that were conquered by Hitler's army. It is true that had the putsch attempt of July 20, 1944 succeeded, many hundreds of thousands of German, Jewish, and Allied lives might have been saved. It is also true that the Federal Republic that emerged from the ruins of the thousand-year Reich was infinitely better for Germany and its neighbors than the anachronistic, authoritarian entity that the resisters had hoped to establish.

Burleigh blames some historians for dismissing the coup attempt as "a typical aristocratic Hussars' charge" while "earnestly extolling the self-sacrifices of the underprivileged Communists." Instead he expresses unabashed admiration for "these conservative, easily cultured, good-humored, intelligent, patriotic, physically-prepossessing and stylish men," even if they "would have been ill suited to the modern academy." His admiration is shared by numerous writers on the resistance, who have by now created quite a cult around its leading figures. Their belief that "aristocracy entailed obligations," and that therefore "they had to grapple with the guilt that lay upon the nation their ancestors had led," is certainly admirable. What is not admirable, and what has not been sufficiently explained by Burleigh or by other writers on the resistance, is the extent to which this very same guilt could be squarely put on these noblemen's own shoulders, for having initially supported Hitler and helped him to take over Germany and much of the rest of Europe, and for carrying out his murderous policies even while they were plotting against him.

One such conspirator was SS-Brigadeführer Arthur Nebe, who also happened to have been a mass murderer. His reports of his units' killing feats in Army Group Center's rear areas went to such other famous resisters who staffed the army group's command as General Henning von Tresckow, who was also involved in coordinating operations with SS-Brigadeführer Kurt Knoblauch, charged with mass murder in Belorussia. Colonel-General Erich Hoeppner, yet another co-conspirator against Hitler, meanwhile urged his troops to fight against "Jewish-Bolshevism" with "unprecedented harshness," so as to bring about the "merciless, total extermination of the enemy." The high-ranking diplomat and resister Graf Friedrich Werner von der Schulenberg similarly thought that the Bolshevik enemy deserved "no pardon."

This is not to say that some of the resisters remained unmoved by the crimes they witnessed and in which they at times became complicit. As Burleigh says, "humanitarian concerns were probably mixed with much more pragmatic considerations." Precisely for this reason, however, neither the tragedy of these men nor the sordid reality of their existence is fully grasped by Burleigh's declaration that they lived "by simple codes of honor and sacrifice."

VI.

The Third Reich concludes with a series of observations on the manner in which World War II was experienced by the Germans and those they occupied. By choosing the Polish uprising in Warsaw in 1944 as "one of the major atrocities of the Second World War," Burleigh wishes to convey his understanding of the war as a conflict between two evil systems, whose victims were helplessly crushed in-between. The problem, of course, is that things were even more complicated and tragic than that. Clearly the uprising was a major catastrophe for Poland, which lost over a quarter of a million fighters and civilians in battling the Germans while the Red Army stood by and waited for the Nazis to destroy the Polish Home Army before marching in to install its own Communist stooges; but saints were few in this war, and demons were legion.

Just one year earlier, as the Nazis quelled the Jewish uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto and murdered its few remaining inhabitants, many Poles stood on the rooftops and cheered. The Home Army refused to hand over arms to the Jewish resistance, preferring to keep them for its own day of reckoning with the Germans. As David Engel has shown, not a few nationalist Polish voices had meanwhile expressed satisfaction that the Nazis, for all their sins, were at least ridding Poland of the Jews. It is in this sense that Warsaw represented all the evils and injustices, the stupidity and heroism, the false hopes and betrayals of that terrible war.

Many years ago, in *The Last Days of Hitler*, Hugh Trevor-Roper described a half-crazed Hitler moving imaginary divisions on the map as the Red Army closes in on his bunker. Burleigh similarly sketches Hitler as "a demented criminal" who, in writing his "final political testament," was trying to convert himself "into a martyred hero." The Führer imagined that he would be sharing his fate "with those millions of others who have taken upon themselves to do the same," but according to Burleigh "the 'millions' were not intent on following him." The Nazi leadership, as Goebbels aptly put it, was merely striving to stage its final demise in a manner that would provide material for future motion pictures.

In this they were as successful as in implementing Hitler's greatest wish, which was to destroy the Jewish existence in Europe. To be sure, remnants of fanatical German fighters still caused the Red Army horrendous casualties in the battle for Berlin, and the news of Hitler's suicide was experienced, according to numerous memoirs, as a terrible shock, especially by young men. But it is true that by this time Hitler had lost his touch with much of the public, the Germans were motivated more by fear of the Gestapo and the Soviets (and the imaginary Jews lurking behind them) than by love for the Führer, and millions of soldiers and civilians were streaming westward in order to fall into the hands of the Western Allies.

Where, then, did the Nazi political religion vanish? If, as Burleigh argues, "the history of the Third Reich reminds us what can happen when desperate people turn to the politics of faith, purveyed by a mock-messiah.... devoted ... to permanent racial struggle," what happened to the tremendous energy generated by this faith? Agreeing with Saul Friedländer, Burleigh notes that Nazism "blended modern scientific rationality, the weeding capability of the 'gardening state' developed to the final degree, with archaic irrational myth, a fusion which gave it its potency." As for the rest of the Germans, they "were bathed in narcissistic ethno-sentimentality, enjoying a brief improvement in their standard of living and vistas of national greatness."

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This is a strong and generally convincing argument, but it leaves us with two nagging questions. How do we reconcile the notion of Nazism as a political religion with Burleigh's own depiction of its realities? If many of the regime's most ruthless perpetrators hardly espoused this religion, if the bulk of the population was more interested in profit and gain than in bloody conquest and glorious apocalypse, if this faith vanished like the melting snow once Hitler was gone, then what is, finally, the relationship between the model and the reality, between the events of the past and their subsequent historical reconstruction?

And if this model of political religion applies to the Third Reich, does this restore the force of the totalitarian paradigm, with its implication that Stalinism and Hitlerism were essentially the same phenomenon, or does it reveal some of the most glaring differences between the two? Despite its own argument to the contrary, what Burleigh's book really demonstrates is this: even if we think of Communism and Nazism as political religions, they expressed profoundly different world views. Burleigh is right to insist on the centrality of ideology in the understanding of Nazism, but this has the effect of undermining his totalitarian paradigm, just as by his impressive empirical reconstruction of life in the Third Reich he weakens the notion that Hitler's Germany was constituted by the mass endorsement of faith. Burleigh's immensely important book actually contains several narratives that bring us closer to the truth precisely because they do not always agree with each other, and sometimes even contradict each other. But surely no single narrative can tell the whole tale of the twentieth century's darkest epoch. ■

Fool Britannia

By DAVID THOMSON

Mainly About Lindsay Anderson by Gavin Lambert

(Knopf, 369 pp., $29.95)

GAVIN LAMBERT AND Lindsay Anderson met at Cheltenham College, England, in the spring of 1939. It was the kind of school that would have had the names of old boys fallen in the Great War inscribed on a wall in gold lettering. They must have wondered if their own names would be up there soon. It was not in the top rank of English public schools, yet one day it would be both the model and the location for the archetypal school in Anderson's film *If* . . . , a place that required sexual outrage and coup d'état by machine gun to be cleansed of its old habits and attitudes. Or the show of cleansing—such melancholy sites of advantage and distinction do linger on, with a team spirit fit to smother their most prickly rebels.

Lambert wasn't sure why he was at Cheltenham. He was not suitable; and he had no intention of becoming so. As for Anderson, his father was in the army, in India (Lindsay was born in Bangalore)—a type of British gentleman that the school did cater to. Lambert was a Wet at the school, but he had found a Tough to look after him (not Lindsay). Lindsay could pass as a Tough—that was always his curse. He played rugby well enough; he had chunky, rather fierce looks, with a hawk's nose and daunting eyes. He would become top prefect, and a classicist. Gavin was a write-off, except that he was good at English and known as a Tart.

Of course, Cheltenham frowned on such terms and their secret life of masturbation and buggery, and reckoned it was a phase that would pass over. It never did for Lambert, and never really for Anderson, though he spent seventy crowded years without being able to own up to it. Lambert left England. He went to Hollywood, to Tangier, and then back to Hollywood, and he has survived to write this exceptionally touching and intelligent book. It's up to us to wonder which of the two boys was happier; or the least unhappy.

Anderson died in 1994, to many tributes. Yes, he had been difficult, abrupt, outspoken; but he was also kind, generous, loyal. It was just that sometimes the latter traits joined with the former ones and left an old friend startled and battered. Lindsay Anderson was unpredictable—or was he unresolved? Yet there were those—other directors, actors, writers, critics—who felt that no one had meant more to the performing arts in Britain in his time. He was also hard up (despite the rumor that he owned a little bit of Bell's Whiskey), living alone, and in his final years dismayed by the lack of serious scripts or opportunities. He was, as ever, angry with Britain, with some friends, with himself.

ANDERSON NEVER FOUND ease or comfort, or trusted them. There was no flow to his career. Instead, he had tossed off this series of extreme and increasingly inexplicable things—*This Sporting Life*, in 1963; *If*. . . , in 1968; *O Lucky Man*, in 1973; *Britannia Hospital*, a ranting parody on national health, in 1982; and *Glory! Glory!*, a swinging assault on evangelism made for American television in 1989. The last four of those projects, it is now clear, were scathing satires on stupidity, corruption, and our willing loss of liveliness, intelligence, and human respect. They were all formed in a mood of such agonized contempt and despair as to be explosive, surreal, and often out of control. The last three all flopped, and utterly bewildered their audiences because their tone was so innovative, so barbed, so Swiftian: you could hear or feel the satirist's self-loathing as much as his disbelief at the way the world was being run.

Maybe, deeper down, there was even a secret exultation that the affairs of men were so chaotic. This is an English attitude that says it doesn't matter what you do, the high-minded are just as doomed as the rascals. There is no saving bloody Britain—John Osborne had this voice, and so did Dennis Potter. It is what the natives (nasty swine) deserve. That is why the hospital in such a state of travesty was called Britannia—as if Anderson was watching the nation go down, unsurprised but not unpleased. Fuck 'em all, the sneer on his face says. His long-term friend Karel Reisz tells a story in the book of how one day he and Lindsay were walking in the street when a stranger stopped them. He wanted to know if Lindsay was the person who had made *This Sporting Life*. Anderson admitted it, and the man poured praise on the film. Anderson stood there, sheepish. Until at last the man slowed and recalled just one small point about the film that might have been improved. "Fuck off!" said Anderson, and strode away.

In its day, *This Sporting Life* (despite those Jean Vigo-like slow-motion scenes of rugby as the human struggle) was reck-

DAVID THOMSON is the author, most recently, of *Nevada* (Knopf).

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oned to be a gritty, realistic, socialist film, full of the hard lives and the blunt souls of David Storey's novel, and reeking of England's north country where, by the early 1960s, the industrial revolution was a wreck and a scar. So it seemed to fit very tidily with the Anderson of the 1950s. In that decade, the would-be filmmaker won a high reputation as a documentarian, and he even promoted his own work (and that of Reisz, Tony Richardson, and Lorenza Mazzetta) into the Free Cinema movement, the manifesto of which was:

> As film-makers we believe that
> No film can be too personal
> The image speaks. Sound amplifies and comments. Size
> Is irrelevant.
> Perfection is not an aim.
> An attitude means a style. A style means an attitude.

"You can make poetry," Anderson once said, and he was always looking to push the real into a dream version of itself. This was 1956. In the same year Anderson wrote an article for *Sight and Sound*, the leading serious film magazine in Britain, called "Stand Up! Stand Up!", which was an attack on the genteel indifference with which Britain dismissed cinema. He called for commitment in critics and filmmakers, which implied a constant sense of politics and the realities of the time. (Anderson was close to the rationale of the BBC of the '60s and '70s, which produced so much fine work with television; and it follows that he was a big influence on such people as Stephen Frears, Dennis Potter, John Hopkins, Alan Clarke, Mike Leigh, Ken Loach, and Tony Garnett.) The editor of *Sight and Sound* who commissioned and ran that article was Gavin Lambert.

After Cheltenham, and in the midst of war, Anderson and Lambert lost touch for a period—though they were both destined for Oxford. It was in that time that Anderson was drafted for military service, and assigned to Intelligence. When the two of them met up again, Anderson—who already hated the army, and its reliance on discipline to tame human intelligence—was interested in hearing how Lambert had escaped the draft. Well, said Gavin, I painted my eyelids gold, and when the examining colonel saw them he asked why I did it. "Because a friend of mine likes it," said Lambert. He was 4F and free to go. He was also unashamed of the escape, because he knew that he would be unhappy and useless in uniform.

For Lambert, the idea of freedom was at least as dangerous as war; whereas Anderson took on the code of duty rather than face himself. In fact, Anderson did note the occasion in his diary: "Gavin was a pleasant surprise when I met him last Friday: far more interesting and individual to talk to. I think he's developing very well. It is amusing that though he talks of homosexuals able to recognize each other, he has not (almost certainly) recognized the same unfortunate trait in me." Well, he had; and he had guessed also that it was a subject not to raise. But Lambert would never have perceived it as an "unfortunate" trait.

THEY WERE FIRM friends now, and after the war, from Oxford initially, they put together a film magazine called *Sequence*. It solicited articles from real filmmakers, and gave space to young critics. Anderson had lately fallen in love with John Ford's *My Darling Clementine*, and he had written a fan letter to the director, and had received a warm note back. He, Lambert, and the other *Sequence* writers were open to the best American pictures, as well as to everything else going on in the world; they did not automatically separate box-office movies from those made for political or personal reasons. They liked *Meet Me in St. Louis* and Cocteau and Buñuel.

It was a very lively, homemade publication, with as many as 5,000 readers. The photographer Lee Miller did a fond portrait of Anderson, Lambert, and their colleague Peter Ericcson, that might be titled "Film Buffs." (It is on the cover of Lambert's new book.) Lambert was hired away to edit and to revivify *Sight and Sound*. He was also trying short stories, and thinking of novels, while Anderson was doing documentaries, the best of which, *Thursday's Children* (1955), about deafness, actually won an Oscar.

This was the London just before *Look Back in Anger*, several years before the Beatles and their mod look. Kenneth Tynan was a half-friend, half-rival. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament was a cause. Suez was a disgrace. And homosexuality was still illegal. There were arrests and imprisonment, and the case of Burgess and McLean was horrid proof of how the public-school phase could become a part of Cold War attitudes. Lambert was simply gay, while Anderson was still in turmoil. Then the closeness came to an end, in a meeting that says so much about the time.

Gavin went to a New Year's Eve party, 1955 turning into 1956, and he was told that there was someone who wanted to meet him. He was led to a corner where "a man with powerful shoulders, a leonine head, and graying blond hair, very handsome but gloomy, stood alone. By choice I felt. He seemed to create a circle of isolation around himself." It was Nicholas Ray, in town to launch *Rebel Without a Cause*,

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grave with stories of James Dean, who had been killed a few months earlier. Several years before, in *Sequence*, Lambert had written a rave of Ray's first film, *They Live by Night*, and Ray remembered. The two of them got on.

Ray had had a couple of wives by then, and a lot more women. He was big and silent and handsome as an artistic cowboy. But he had a gay life, too, and he and Lambert were soon in love. Before very long, he invited Lambert to come to Los Angeles to help him on what became *Bigger Than Life*. Lambert agreed, on the spot. He was English, but the Englishness was incidental. Ray showed him how to do a man's handshake for Hollywood, so no one would suspect.

Anderson observed all of this with interest. He recognized the romantic urge in Lambert, but he also foresaw the danger of confusing private feelings and the vexed work on a Twentieth Century Fox picture. As they talked, Lambert saw that Ray and Anderson were alike, nursing wounded artistic visions, lurching along with their untidy, dishonest lives. The passage that describes this comes from a brilliant psychological novel; and reading it, you feel how much Lambert himself learned from Anderson.

So Lambert went to Hollywood, had a heady yet unsatisfactory relationship with Ray (the lament of so many), and became a novelist. The description of Ray in his book is heartbreakingly good: the natural who became tortured in his own talent, the man whose yearning to confide or confess led to wells of silence, the implacable self-destructive.

> One weekend in Bungalow 2, he woke me around two in the morning, led me without a word to his bedroom, and made love. Almost immediately afterward he fell asleep. Before going back to my room, I tried to identify the mysterious fragrance of Nick's bed linen. I traced it partly to the perfume he sometimes used, and which I could sniff on his body asleep at my side. But there was also something sickly-chemical in the air. Innocent about drugs in those days, I knew Nick took sleeping pills and wondered if they left an aroma. In his bathroom that night I discovered a medicine cabinet crammed with prescriptions, and realized how much he depended on the doctors he criminalized as Bigger Than Life.

Lambert is gentle with his occasional lover, but as the first real revelation of Ray's homosexuality, this book is about more than Lindsay Anderson.

In *Contents* magazine recently, Gore Vidal said that Lambert's *The Slide Area* was one of the best Hollywood fictions. Published in 1959, the book is not quite a gathering of stories, but more a series of views of Malibu and its environs, the place where Hollywood's great allegedly seek rest and actually obsess over reassurance as they watch for brush fires, land slides and the collapse of their own reputations. It and *Inside Daisy Clover* are well worth reading. In addition, Lambert did a book-length conversation, *On Cukor*, that pioneered this form, as well as thoroughly researched books on Norma Shearer and Nazimova. He has done scripts, too: *Sons and Lovers*, *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone*, *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*. He is at present writing the life of Natalie Wood; and there is every reason to have high hopes for that book if it can be as rich and as intimate as *Mainly About Lindsay Anderson*.

Once parted, Lambert and Anderson were friends by correspondence, telephone calls, and occasional visits. But they were held together by something else—by that mutual feeling, what if.... Lambert might easily have been mufti or minister of culture in the new Britain, and Anderson might have killed himself (or someone) in Hollywood. On the other hand, he might have turned happy, plumper, and more openly in love with men. I suspect that the thought was always there, like a kind of cross-reference.

As it was, Anderson became a theater director as well as a film director. He was part of the dangerous new age at the Royal Court and he directed such things as John Arden's *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance*, *Billy Liar*, many plays by David Storey, Joe Orton's *Entertaining Mr. Sloane*, and *The Seagull* (with Helen Mirren). He had the forlorn habit of falling for flagrantly heterosexual actors—Serge Reggiani, Richard Harris, Albert Finney, Malcolm McDowell, Frank Grimes—so nothing ever quite worked out. It seems unlikely that Anderson ever had a real gay love, or that he spent a day without thinking of it. Instead, he did what he could to look after such unhappy actresses as Rachel Roberts and Jill Bennett.

The book really is mainly about Anderson. Lambert was given the diaries, the letters, and so on after Anderson's death, and he is faithful to that task. But the

Dear Elation,

There is something else you didn't know.

You cannot be two places at once:
wearing earrings for my return and packing up
every mirror in your apartment.

You must not dream for the rest of us.
You must dream for the rest of us.

Whatever you choose. Get into the car and drive.

I often think of our one memory—why is that—
when we have known each other so long?

There was amber light over the high walls of a city.
It is an old city.

Boys and colts were playing soccer in the plaza of the kings
The bay is reflected of amber, filtered through lantern-lights

You were my friend.

Flapping hair.
Rife.
Feathering dress.

You cannot watch the same movie at 20, at 25.

Her blushes mean a different moment.

So, when this holds back
make plans,
make haste.

Make a jagged point in the rock.
You are the rock.

Sarah Gambito

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Nicholas Ray episode is one of several glimpses of Lambert's life. The contrast is very telling. Anderson lived in a small flat, feeling trapped, whereas Lambert had seen wonders. Late in life, he elected to return to Los Angeles, to research Norma Shearer, but

> I still loved Morocco (always would), especially the magical south beyond the Atlas Mountains, with its succession of battlemented casbahs, its pastoral valleys, salt lakes, dark petrified steppes, and finally the Sahara dunes, overwhelmingly still and silent. But on the cusp of sixty-three, I was old enough to start wondering where I wanted or didn't want to die. As England had never really felt like home, there was no question of trying to go home again, and I suspected that Los Angeles would be preferable to Tangier for living as well as dying.

In contrast, Anderson lived out his days in a small patch of London, overcast and inefficient London, a city without horizons. He had become a bit like one of Alan Bennett's Talking Heads—he also directed the Bennett play *The Old Crowd*, for television. I think that Lambert was the happier of the two, but he was born with a capacity for it. It may also be that he is and was the better artist. Muddle goes through and through Anderson. In which case, we are all lucky that one man was subject for the other. Hence this fascinating book. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

continued from page 5

that every man, woman, and child is guilty of Milosevic's crimes, so you assume that Vojislav Kostunica thinks the same way you do ("Bedtime for Slobo," October 9). You may find this incomprehensible, but Kostunica, who translated *The Federalist Papers* into Serbo-Croatian, is able to distinguish between the present foreign policy establishment in Washington and the American people, with whom he has no quarrel.

CHARLES SIMIC
Strafford, New Hampshire

Agent provocateur

TO THE EDITORS:
Your editorial said much that is important, but the matter of Ariel Sharon's "provocation" deserves further comment ("When There Is No Peace," October 16). Sharon did not deface Islamic shrines and did not convey disrespect for Islamic beliefs. This was the sum total of the "provocation" that was utterly intolerable to Arabs, compelling them to respond by rioting and dropping stones on Jewish worshipers at the Western Wall. The strange thing is that American and Western commentators instantly accepted, embraced, and legitimated this notion of "provocation" without examining what it actually entailed.

The concept of "provocation" has been much abused in our times by extremist movements and totalitarian systems—always as an excuse and a justification for hate propaganda and violence. For the extremist/radical, any action, opinion, or attitude that differs from his own is a provocation. The threshold for defining what is provocative is determined by expectations as to the proper nature of the world.

Ehud Barak's recent readiness to make sweeping concessions and the speedy, undignified Israeli pullback from southern Lebanon raised Arab extremists' expectations of endless Israeli concessions and even gave some ground to the hope that, if they steadily demand more, someday the ultimate provocation—the very existence of Israel—will be undone.

PAUL HOLLANDER
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, Massachusetts

Diatribes

TO THE EDITORS:
In his column "RU 4 Life," (October 16), Andrew Sullivan writes, "The longer a fetus has lived, the more troublesome an abortion is." He continues: "This used to be the Catholic position, based upon the Thomist notion that a human soul enters a fetus during the 'quickening' at the end of the first trimester." In fact, Thomas Aquinas set the time of ensoulment earlier than that, but, very significantly, he placed it later for a female than a male. His decision to do so followed logically from his belief that women were inherently inferior to men, and it was cited by the Vatican in 1976 (in a blatantly out-of-context version that leaves out this underlying reason for Aquinas's position) as one of the reasons for denying women access to the priesthood.

"Pro-life" propaganda to the contrary, the theological position on abortion has absolutely nothing to do with concern for the "sanctity of human life." Rather, it has to do with male fear of what might happen if women are allowed reproductive freedom (in this case, not forced to remain pregnant against their will), for with it comes the potential for political and economic power. In this sense, the famous statement attributed to Gloria Steinem—"If men could get pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament"—is more profound that it might at first appear.

Finally, as a biologist, I would like to comment on Sullivan's concern about "partial-birth" abortions. He and many others seem convinced that the difference between a fetus about to be born and a newborn infant is the same as the difference between a person walking from one room to another. Nothing could be further from the truth. The anatomical and physiological changes that occur in the transition from fetus to infancy are among the most profound in a lifetime; those that occur as we move through infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, middle age, and old age pale by comparison. Politicians who refer to late-term abortions as "infanticide" combine an ignorance of the human developmental process with a cruelty beyond belief to those women who, through no fault of their own, may lack the knowledge to see through such nonsense.

JEFFREY J. W. BAKER
Ivy, Virginia

TO THE EDITORS:
Andrew Sullivan's TRB of October 16 was one of the most anti-feminist diatribes I've read in some time. While shaking his finger at women who casually "pull the switch" on their fetuses, Sullivan also gives his tortuously considered blessing to RU-486. This because he believes it will involve greater physical and emotional suffering for the women who choose it.

The contemptibility of his argument aside, Sullivan's reasoning is flawed. When the only option was a life-threatening back-alley abortion without anesthesia or moral support, the incidence of abortion did not decrease. A woman's will when faced with the burden of unwanted pregnancy is a powerful force. This is what Sullivan does not grasp, much less respect.

As evidence, Sullivan says the abortion rate in France is lower than in this country because RU-486 has made clear the "actual act of killing." This weirdly ignores France's dedication to family-planning services, which stands in stark contrast to the public moralizing, religious fanaticism, and governmental obstruction that impede progress in reproductive health in the United States and ensure a high abortion rate.

JOANNA LAKE
Brooklyn, New York

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Fall Guy

WITH THE FLORIDA recount ongoing, it looks as if George W. Bush may win the presidency yet. If so, the great consolation of this Tuesday's balloting may be that it has rid us forever of the noxious presence of Ralph Nader. Indeed, the only element of the campaign more discomfiting than Nader himself has been the spectacle of liberal intellectuals obsequiously slathering praise upon the Green Party candidate in an effort to sweet-talk him into abandoning his candidacy. Perhaps it's because I came of age after the Corvair; however, I view Nader not as a liberal hero but as a paranoid, self-absorbed reactionary. Indeed, I can discern in the man no redeeming qualities whatsoever.

AT THE VERY LEAST, ONE MIGHT have expected that a gadfly candidate such as Nader—free from the constraint of having to assemble a politically diverse majority—would be an entertaining straight-talker. Some pundits liked to compare Nader to John McCain and Jesse Ventura, suggesting his appeal was due in part to his authenticity and his hostility to spin. But Nader was actually the most robotic, least spontaneous candidate in the race, shamelessly repeating his talking points with the discipline of a low-level public relations agent. His catchphrases, moreover, generally fell into the category of obvious lies. If asked about the prospect that he could help defeat Al Gore, for instance, Nader would invariably reply, "Only Al Gore can beat Al Gore." By that reasoning, Nader could not throw the election, because the only factor controlling its outcome was Gore's innate political skill. But that is patent nonsense—election outcomes are controlled by lots of factors, including the skills of one's opponent and, in this case, the presence of a third-party candidate who saps votes almost exclusively from one contender. Nader's effect is now demonstrable: If just a small percentage of his 97,000 votes in Florida had instead gone to Gore—and polls suggested that more than half of them would have—then Gore would have easily defeated Bush. No doubt Nader finds such a prospect delicious. In the three days before the election, he traveled not to uncontested states like New York and Texas—where he could potentially have scooped up thousands of liberal votes without aiding Bush—but to Pennsylvania and Florida, where every spare liberal vote was crucial. Nader, in other words, was so intent on defeating Gore that he willfully sacrificed his own vote total.

NADER'S DISHONESTY STEMS IN PART from his dogged unwillingness to admit any fact that complicates the rationale for his candidacy. He begins with the unshakable premise that the electorate is a vast left-wing majority waiting to be awakened from its apathy. Any evidence to the contrary—which would justify liberal pragmatism—must be dismissed. So when a TV anchor brought up Gore's poor showing in West Virginia, Nader replied that Gore had lost because "he went down with King Coal instead of the people of West Virginia." It's not that coal miners were afraid that Gore's environmentalism would cost them their jobs! They voted for Bush because Gore was not environmentalist enough! Asked what surprised him in the election, Nader observed that Bush was struggling in Florida. "I think the two mistakes Bush made," he elucidated, "were on Social Security and on this tax cut that benefits the wealthy." But wait: These were not merely tactical missteps—on the order of spending too much time campaigning in California—but highly consequential policy stands that offer a strong rationale for voting for Gore. Nader seemed to notice that this logic veered perilously close to a conclusion that would have induced cognitive dissonance. So he righted himself at once, declaring in the next sentence, "But you know, don't worry, the Democrats are very good, Larry, at electing very bad Republicans." Any criticism of the Republicans can only be explained as a consequence of the weakness of the Democrats—which can only be remedied, of course, by weakening them still more.

NADER'S ELECTION-NIGHT ATTEMPT to spin his 3 percent showing at the polls resembled nothing so much as Orrin Hatch straining to explain why his sixth-place Iowa Caucus finish had positioned him perfectly for the New Hampshire primary. "What we know for sure," boasted Nader, "is that we're coming out of Election Day with the third-largest party in America, replacing the Reform Party." So, despite what he had said all along, getting 5 percent of the vote and millions of dollars in matching funds didn't really matter after all. Under Nader, the Greens have achieved the loftier goal of surmounting Pat Buchanan's 0 percent of the popular vote. And the Natural Law Party, needless to say, has been left in the dust.

IF BUSH IS INDEED ELECTED, NADER will be doomed, and not just because he failed to win his much-needed loot. The fantasy that is the basis of his candidacy depends upon the absence of a Republican president. Why, one might ask, did Nader run a stronger left-wing insurgency against Gore this year than against Clinton four years ago? (Especially considering that Gore's 2000 campaign is more liberal in both substance and rhetoric than Clinton's Dick Morris-ized 1996 effort?) The answer is that, four years ago, we were just a year removed from the Gingrich revolution and only four years removed from an era of Republican presidents. The fear of Republicans controlling Washington still had resonance on the left. Now, though, the Naderites have forgotten what it's like to have a Republican president—clear-cutting in the Pacific Northwest, anyone?—and concentrate instead on the tragedy of Democratic moderation. By wishing away conservatism, lefties can imagine that the only choices are between liberal centrism and full-throated radicalism. And if you accept that premise, voting for Nader doesn't seem so counterproductive. Nader's lies are designed to nurture in his followers the fantasy that they can escape the crushing logic of a winner-take-all electoral system.

BUT IF BUSH TAKES OFFICE, THERE will be a living, breathing conservative in the White House, privatizing social programs, deregulating business, and generally throwing the fear of God into the Naderites. According to Nader's calculation, such a conservative administration will catalyze his movement, forcing the Democrats to move left to co-opt his followers or risk losing ever more members to the Green Party. In fact, the opposite outcome is all but certain: A Bush presidency will instill in Nader voters a renewed appreciation for the comparative virtues of moderate liberalism. The Democrats will have no reason to move left, because the left will move toward them. Nader's candidacy will serve as an object lesson in the futility of voting for a third party. Each of Bush's conservative accomplishments will lay bare Nader's dishonesty, and the destructive power of left-wing maximalism will be extinguished for a generation.

I WROTE ABOVE THAT NADER HAD NO redeeming qualities. I now correct myself; that is one.

JONATHAN CHAIT

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The Benefit of Florida's School Choice Program

By Tracy Richardson, shown with Khaliah

Florida's A+ Opportunity Scholarship Program lets me choose where my daughter, Khaliah, attends school. This has made a tremendous difference in her life. It has given me great peace of mind.

After we moved to a new neighborhood in Pensacola, I first looked at three public school options.

Classes were unruly at the school nearest our home. I didn't see how Khaliah could learn with so much commotion.

When I visited a magnet public school, it was much better, but there was a waiting list. So, for Khaliah, it wasn't really an option.

Finally, I decided that Khaliah should move across town, to live with my mother and attend a different public school. But, that did not work well either. The classrooms were too noisy. Teachers said Khaliah couldn't focus because of learning disabilities. They said she needed medication.

For me, this all boiled down to the fact that Khaliah was not getting an education. That just isn't right. You send your children to school, and you expect them to learn.

Parent[illegible] should [illegible] widespread [illegible] unless you're poor.

At this point, I would have been out of choices were it not for the A+ Opportunity Scholarship Program. Because of it, I could consider whether a private school was best for Khaliah.

I ended up using the A+ program to choose Montessori Elementary School. The methods there fit Khaliah's learning style very well. They work hands-on with her. In her class, you can hear a pin drop. Discipline is constructive. Kids are not just scolded. They must take ownership of their behavior. If they do something wrong, there is a consequence.

So many things have improved. Khaliah is motivated. I used to drag her out of bed for school. Not any more.

Khaliah has been accepted with open arms. While there are few African Americans at Montessori, she has more birthday party invitations than ever.

As a parent, I get overwhelming support from the school. Whatever it takes to make the kids learn, they seem willing to do it.

I am so very grateful to Florida's Governor, Jeb Bush, and Legislature for giving me this opportunity.

baeo

Black Alliance for Educational Options

for more information go to: www.schoolchoiceinfo.org

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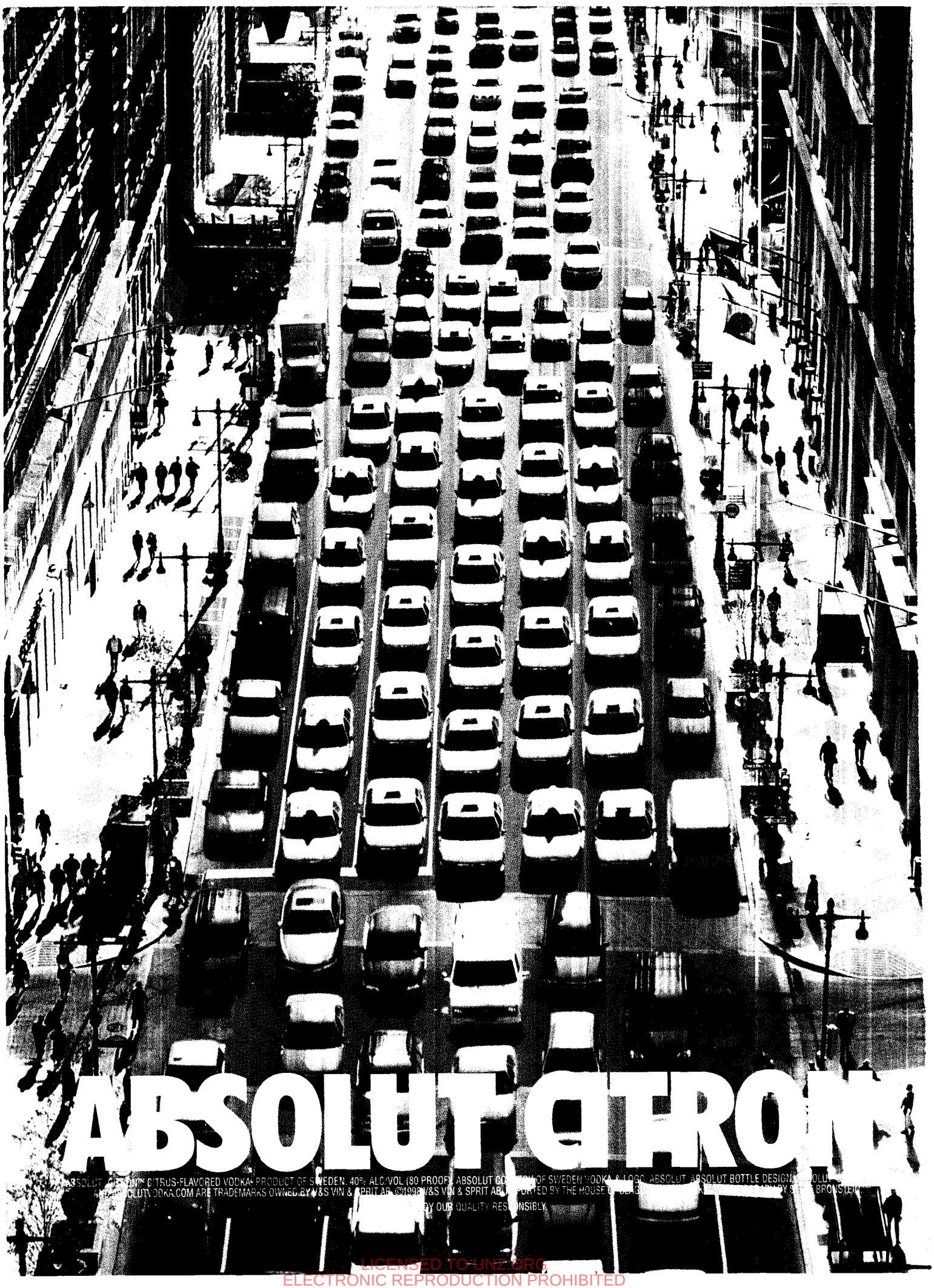

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